WINGED ARROW'S MEDICINE

HARRY CASTLEMON

Earle Buckminster

"STEADY, THERE!" HE SHOUTED. "RIGHT FRONT INTO LINE! REVOLVERS! GIVE THEM THE BEST YOU'VE GOT!"

WINGED ARROW'S MEDICINE

OR

THE MASSACRE AT FORT PHIL KEARNEY

BY

HARRY CASTLEMON

Author of "The First Capture" "Gun Boat Series," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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CHAPTER I.

The Second Lieutenant

Guy Preston was a young and beardless boy fresh from "The Point." He was now attached to the —th cavalry and was one of three hundred men who had been ordered to that far-away country to assist in building the fort, which was named after the lamented hero, Phil Kearney. He had left the fort a short time before, and was out after prairie chickens, being armed with a double-barreled shotgun. The brace of birds which was tied to the pommel of his saddle proved that he was something of an adept at shooting on the wing. He was dressed in the uniform of the cavalry service, with a pair of straps on his shoulders that were decidedly the worse for wear, and his horse, a Kentucky thoroughbred, which, although seemingly impatient to exhibit the mettle that was

in him, was obedient to the rein and stopped or went ahead when his owner commanded him.

"There do not seem to be many chickens here, Tom, and so I think we will go back to the Fort," said Guy, raising himself in his stirrups and casting impatient glances on all sides of him. "We were told to stay within sight of the fortifications, but that last prairie chicken was too much for me. It made me disobey orders. There does not seem to be any Sioux here either, and I don't see why they cannot let us alone. We could see plenty of fun in hunting if that miserable Red Cloud was out of the way."

Guy Preston was not the only one who wished that same thing of Red Cloud. His regiment had been stationed, in the first place, at Fort Robinson in Nebraska, which was the central point from which operations against the hostiles were organized. And what had caused this Red Cloud to go on the war-path? It was simply because the United States government had determined to open a

road to Montana by way of Powder River. The way the road was laid out made it necessary that it should pass through the favorite hunting ground of the Sioux Indians, and some of them were fiercely opposed to it. The authorities made treaties with the hereditary chiefs by whom the right of way was granted, but the dissatisfaction that arose on account of it was so great that it led to an open rupture.

Red Cloud was not an hereditary chief; that is, he was not a chief of any sort. He belonged to "the rank and file" of the band, but he was ambitious to become something better. The uneasiness among the Indians gave him a glorious chance. He denounced the treaties and their makers, and declared war to the knife against every white man who came over that road or ventured into that country.

There are always some discontented ones among the Indians, men who cannot rest easy unless they are on the warpath, and crowds of these warriors flocked to his standard. The Sioux nation was the most powerful of any

tribe on this continent. They were rich in everything that goes to make up an Indian's idea of wealth,—ponies, furs, and weapons; and, more than all, the countless numbers of buffalo that roamed through the Powder River country made them independent of the whites. They numbered 20,000 in all, and could put 3,000 warriors in the field. The hereditary chiefs very soon found themselves deserted and powerless when Red Cloud raised his standard, and in some instances were only too glad to preserve their control over their bands by acknowledging the new chief as their master. Finding himself at the head of so strong a force, Red Cloud took to the warpath at once, and a long, tedious war ensued, during which he made a great reputation. Avoiding any serious engagement, he so harassed all trains and expeditions sent against him that the few troops then in his country could scarcely be said to hold even the ground they actually stood upon. Several forts were established, but they protected only what was in-

side their palisades. A load of wood for fuel could not be cut outside without a conflict, and it finally culminated in the terrible tragedy which it is the purpose of this story to reveal,—for this is a true tale, and we tell it just as it happened.

At last the commanding officer at Fort Robinson became out of all patience and determined to bring the Sioux to close quarters; so he sent Colonel Carrington on a long campaign with a force strong enough to follow the Sioux wherever they went, destroying their villages and reducing them to submission. The Colonel was also instructed to build a strong post upon the Powder or Tongue rivers and operate against them from there. The Fort was built at last and named after one of the bravest generals who gave up his life during our Civil War; but it was only after long months of toil and hardship. Red Cloud's warriors followed him all the way, stealing such stock as strayed away from the camp and cutting off small bodies of men that were sent

out any distance from the main body. Guy Preston was there and saw how the hostiles operated, and we will venture the assertion that more than once he thought of home, and, if the truth must be told, he did not blame the Indians for fighting. The lands which they were forced to give up were their home, and they were about to surrender their only means of subsistence. The buffalo comprised all they had. It furnished them with food and raiment, coverings for their beds and the tepees in which they lived. The whites did not kill what they wanted for use, but wantonly slaughtered thousands simply to make a "record." All the scum of civilization fled to the frontier, and Bills and Dicks whose reputations were not of the best swaggered about the streets of canvas cities during the winter and roamed the plains during the summer to shoot buffalo. These people did not know or did not care what the buffalo meant to the Indian. It meant that when they were gone, the Indian would starve to death. No

matter what treaties our government made with the Indians, it had no effect upon the reckless whites. They encouraged the slaughter of the game. Future historians will have to record that all our Western Indian wars were brought about by the acts of irresponsible and disreputable characters who usurped all the best hunting lands and attacked every band of Indians they saw, whether friendly or hostile, Sioux or Pawnees.

Red Cloud was a man of great foresight, although born in a humble position. He saw that the government could not or would not keep their treaties and forbid these adventurers from trespassing on their hunting grounds, and forthwith, relying upon his assumed popularity, which came to him the moment he declared war on the whites, he called a convention of all the Sioux and allied tribes. When that convention met he rehearsed their wrongs and it was decided that they would do what any brave people would do under the same circumstances — fight the whites as

long as possible. As I said, a long war was the result; so when Colonel Carrington entrenched himself behind the stockade of Fort Phil Kearney, he shut himself off from the civilized world. He was there, and the Indians resolved that he should stay there. Even his most experienced and bravest scouts could not get through to take dispatches to his superiors. They found Indians all around them, and they were seen and driven back. The wily chief located his village at no great distance away, and established a code of signals by which he could be informed at any time just what the soldiers were doing in the Fort. Every wood train that went out was attacked, and a strong force was necessary for their protection. In spite of all the precautions they could use, between fifteen and twenty soldiers were killed during the months of November and December.

But Red Cloud was by no means satisfied with what he had done. He wanted to get rid of the whites entirely, but he had not

taken measures to do it; so he called another convention to meet in his village some time in December. Then he broached his program. After repeating that the buffalo would all be killed, which was the worst thing that could happen to a plain Indian, he said: "We must take this Fort. If we once whip these soldiers and burn their palisade, the government will not send out any more." All the other chiefs believed that, and they decided upon a stratagem which will appear as our story progresses.

Guy Preston, as well as all the younger officers in the Fort, was not very well pleased to be shut up inside those log walls with no chance to make themselves famous by fighting the Indians, and, worse than all, he could look over the stockade at almost any time of the day and see the prairie chickens flitting about as if there were not a hostile Sioux within a hundred miles of them.

"What is the reason the Colonel will not let one of us go out and knock over a few of them for dinner?" he said to a sentry one

day while he stood by his side watching them. "I don't see a single Sioux in sight."

"No, sir," replied the sentry. "But they are there, sure enough. Every little tuft of grass hides one."

"But why don't they show themselves?"

"They do when they can make anything by it. Have you forgotten Mike and Tony?"

The sentry called the names of two plainsmen,—experienced scouts they were too,—who had attempted to leave the Fort only a few nights before with some papers that the Colonel wished particularly to send to his superior officer. They had been gone about three hours, but when they returned they looked as though they had been through three or four wars. They barely escaped and that was all; and Tony carried with him the mark of an arrow which came near ending his career then and there.

"But this is daytime," said Guy. "I don't see what harm there can be in riding around over the prairie in plain sight of the post.

I believe I will ask the Colonel to let me try it on."

"Very good, sir," replied the sentry. "But he won't let you go."

The Lieutenant did not catch all this reply, but hurried away to find the commanding officer. He sent in his name by the Orderly and presently entered the room to which young officers of his rank seldom went unless to receive orders or listen to a reprimand. The Colonel was in his shirt sleeves and pacing back and forth, and now and then he took one of his hands out of his pockets to run it impatiently through his hair. He seemed to have forgotten that he was a soldier and commander of the Fort besides, for he was so impatient at being shut up without remedy that he could scarcely control himself. He stopped and turned toward Mr. Preston with something like a frown upon his face.

"Well, what is it now?" he inquired. "Do you know where the Indians are?"

"No, sir, and I don't believe there is one within two miles of the Fort," answered the Lieutenant.

The Colonel walked to his table, picked up his eyeglasses and put them on. He wanted to look at the officer who could give such an opinion as this.

"I should like permission to ride out on the prairie a little way and shoot some of those prairie chickens which are so thick out there," said Mr. Preston. "I saw some within twenty yards of the post."

The Colonel stared hard at Mr. Preston and then drew up the nearest chair and sat down. At first he opened his mouth as if to give a very emphatic reply to this strange request, but on second thought he shouted:—

"Orderly, tell the Adjutant I want to see him."

CHAPTER II.

An Invitation

Guy Preston was sorely perplexed by this order. He was not aware that he had done anything to be reported to the Adjutant, and besides that officer was not a member of his company. He had not been invited to sit down as was generally the case with officers who came there to see the Colonel on business, but stood twirling his cap in his hand; and every time he raised his eyes to the Colonel's face he saw that the officer was still regarding him behind his eyeglasses as if he meant to look him through.

"Are you aware that the Sioux are very hostile, and have you any idea what they will do if they capture you?" said the Colonel, breaking the silence at last.

"But they will not capture me, sir," answered Guy. "I shall go on horseback, and the Indian pony does not live which can beat Tom."

"I don't suppose that a bullet or an arrow could stretch your Tom out dead while you were running away from them?" said the Colonel.

"Yes, sir, I suppose they can do that, but they would not take me alive, all the same."

Guy finished the sentence by putting his hand into his hip pocket and drawing forth a Derringer which he showed to the Colonel.

"Humph!" said the officer. "You would shoot yourself before you would be taken prisoner? Well, I don't know but that is the right thing to do."

At this moment the First Lieutenant who acted as Adjutant came into the room. He listened with surprise when his officer made him acquainted with the request that Guy Preston had brought in to him, adding:—

"You have your report for this quarter all made out?"

The Adjutant replied that he had.

"Well, I shall want you to make out an entry in your 'Remarks' in regard to Lieutenant Preston," said the Colonel. "You will simply say: 'Requested permission to go out in the face of the Sioux for the purpose of shooting some sage hens. Granted. He was shot down and killed by the Sioux in plain view of the Fort.' You may go," he continued, walking up and taking Preston by the hand. "I never expect to see you again."

"Th—thank you, sir," replied the Lieutenant, who was confounded by the way his request was granted. "I will surely be back in the course of an hour or two."

When Guy had left the room, the Colonel's face relaxed, and filling up his pipe he settled himself for a smoke.

"I do not think he will go," said the Adjutant with a laugh. "I know I would not stir a peg after I had received such a permission as that."

"Keep an eye on him," said the Colonel, "and if you see him mount his horse, just

step up and tell him not to go out of sight of the Fort. I do not blame these boys for getting impatient, I want to do something myself, but I don't know what it is."

"Halloo, Preston, where are you going now?" exclaimed one of his roommates, as he entered his apartment and began to overhaul his hunting rig. "A shotgun! You are not going outside!"

"The Colonel told me to go," answered Preston. "He called them sage hens, but I believe they are prairie chickens."

"And you are going outside to shoot them, and the Sioux all around you?" cried the young officer, throwing down his book and raising himself to a sitting posture on his bunk. "Guy, you are crazy."

"I guess that is what the Colonel seemed to think; but he told me to go, and said he never expected to meet me again. He is going to bluff me, but he will find that I am not that sort."

Guy then went on to tell Perkins how the request was received and the way it was

granted, to all of which he listened in amazement. As soon as he began to get it through his head, he implored his roommate to let the permission go by default; the Colonel did not expect him to go; he knew how perilous the undertaking was, and he hoped, by drawing it in its true colors, to make Preston see it also; but Preston did not see it in that way.

"He did not go at it right," said he. "He took the very course to make me go out there. If he is going to find out how brave I am, he will certainly find it out."

"You are a fool," declared Perkins hotly. "I never expect to see you again either. When I shake you by the hand at the gate it will be the last time until I see you brought in for good."

Guy Preston began to see at last that he was about to do something at which many a better man and braver than he ever dared be would hesitate. It might be that "every little tuft of grass concealed a Sioux warrior," and

an arrow or a bullet sped when he was not looking for it would put an end to his redoubtable thoroughbred and leave him at the mercy of the Indians who had beleaguered the Fort; but he had his loaded Derringer in his pocket, and he was sure that with it he could escape the barbarities they would inflict upon him. He took his double barrel out of its case, and bade Perkins good-by; but that worthy did not notice him at all. He got up and accompanied Preston to the stables, saw him saddle his horse and lead him to the gate. He found the Adjutant there waiting to pass the orders the Colonel had last given him, and he seemed more surprised than ever to learn that the young officer was still bent on going outside; but he said, as if he were giving ordinary instructions to one who had a simple duty to perform:—

"Do you see those hills about a mile and a half off? Well, keep inside of them. If you go over them, we shall give you up. Look out for an ambuscade."

"Now will you bid me good-by, Perkins?" said Guy, extending his hand. "Oh, you need not be so particular about giving it a brotherly clasp. I will see you again in two or three hours, and I shall have a lot of prairie chickens to show you. Good-by everybody."

"I am really surprised at the Colonel," said Perkins, as he stood by the Adjutant's side and watched his comrade as he galloped away. "He should have refused him point-blank."

"The Colonel is sorry enough for it now when it is too late," said the officer. "He supposed, of course, when the boy found out how much danger there was in his undertaking that he would give it up; but I knew he was taking the wrong course. Good-by Preston. By gracious, he has one prairie chicken already!"

Yes; the very first chicken that his horse frightened up was filled full of No. 8 shot, and Preston had something for his dinner. The Adjutant could not wait to see any more. He had business to attend to somewhere in-

side, so he went off and Perkins sat there on the ground for an hour and kept watch of his companion as he wandered to and fro on the prairie in search of another chicken. At last one got up before him, but the shooter seemed to have lost his skill. The double barrel spoke twice in quick succession, but the chicken kept on and in a moment more flew over the ridge out of sight. At least that was what Perkins thought he had done, the distance being so great that he could not see the chicken at all; but he judged from Guy's actions that that was the way he had gone. After waiting long enough to reload his gun, he put spurs to his horse and presently he too was out of sight.

"Good-by Guy Preston," said Perkins, with a sigh; "you are the best fellow that ever lived, and now the Sioux have got you sure. You should have had better sense than to disobey the Adjutant's orders."

Perkins was in a very gloomy frame of mind as he took his way through the gate

and finally brought up before the Adjutant's door. A voice from the inside bade him enter, and the Lieutenant knew as soon as he looked at him that he had some news to communicate.

"Guy Preston has gone, sir," said he.

"Over the ridge?" replied the officer, starting up in his chair.

"Yes, sir. The second chicken he shot at went that way, or at least I thought so, and Guy followed after him."

The Adjutant said no more. Guy was a favorite with all the officers and men, and the idea of him losing his life through a disobedience of orders was distressing. He shoved a sheet of paper which he had been examining to one side, got up and walked to a window and looked out at the sentry who stood in front of the gate; and Perkins, taking this as a gentle hint that conversation was no longer desirable, put on his hat and retreated through the door.

Guy Preston was a persevering hunter, and when he reached the top of the swell he saw

the chicken just settling in the grass about one hundred yards away. This time there was no mistake about it. The game "lay well to cover," and when the horse was almost ready to step upon him he arose and sought safety in flight; but he laid too long. When the shotgun spoke again he came down, and Guy had another chicken. For half an hour longer he rode about behind the swell, and finally he aroused himself and began to look around him. He was surprised to see that he had broken orders by at least a mile or more.

"Come on, Tom, and we will go back in a hurry," said he, pulling the horse's head around. "There were more chickens out here when I looked over the palisade at them, and where are they now? Get up, Tom, and we'll—"

Something happened just then to call Guy back to earth, and made him think a little more of the Sioux than he did a few moments previous. It was the sight of a solitary warrior sitting on his horse about half a mile

away, and what struck Guy as something strange was, he did not seem at all afraid of being observed by anybody. Guy drew up his horse and looked at him. He could see that the Indian brave was dressed in war costume, but the distance was so great, not having a glass with him, that he could not make out whether he was a chieftain or not. The warrior seemed to be equally interested in him, for after looking at Guy for a minute or two, he put his horse in motion and came down the swell toward him.

"I don't believe I care for a closer acquaintance," said the young officer, gathering up the reins and leaning forward in the saddle, still keeping his eyes fixed upon the approaching savage. "If you want a race, come on. It is lucky for you that I haven't my Winchester in my hands. I would take that war bonnet of yours into the Fort with me as a trophy."

But somehow Guy did not put his horse into rapid motion as he had expected to do. The Indian, when he saw that Guy was get-

ting ready to flee, stopped his own horse, and, as if to assure him that his intentions were pacific, held his rifle above his head at arm's length. This done he swung himself to the ground and laid the weapon at full length in the grass. Then he unbuckled his belt, which he also showed to Guy, and laid it beside the rifle. The next belt he took off was the one containing his knife, which he also placed with the others, and having completely disarmed himself, he placed one hand upon his horse's withers, gracefully leaped into the saddle, and once more rode toward Guy.

"I believe he wants to communicate," thought Guy, not knowing whether or not to accept his invitation. "Sioux, thy name is treachery; and that fellow's motions show me that he is as active as a cat. There," he added, seeing that the savage stopped his horse and sat regarding Guy intently, "he is waiting to see what I am going to do. I believe I will try him on."

Guy Preston's actions must by this time have satisfied the reader that he was a boy who could not easily be frightened. His coming out on the prairie to shoot chickens must have convinced one of that fact. Without hesitating a moment he proceeded to disarm himself the same as the savage had done, but all he had to do was to lay down his shotgun and take off the belt containing his cartridges. His loaded Derringer he kept in his hip pocket.

"Now come on," said he, as he again mounted his horse. "He may have some weapons about him, but if he has I have my Derringer."

CHAPTER III.

Winged Arrow

Guy often said that he did not see why it was that he and the savage should advance to meet each other in that cool and collected manner. If the Indian had friends who were concealed behind the swells and he was simply trying to get him further away from the Fort so that they could surround and capture him, he saw no signs to indicate it. He never looked behind him at all. He came on as though he had no suspicion, and Guy, not to be outdone by his savage confederate, came on in the same way. He had a great curiosity to see a real live Indian in his war paint, but as he drew nearer he discovered that there were no signs of paint about this Indian. It was a whiter face than

people of his tribe usually boast of, and Guy thought that he was smiling in a good-natured sort of way. A few steps more and he was aware of it; and furthermore he discovered that his savage friend, if that was the name to be applied to him, was a boy but little older than himself. As soon as he approached within speaking distance he raised his hand to his bonnet with a military flourish and said, in perfect English:—

"How do you do, sir?"

Guy raised his hand to his cap, but he could not say anything in reply. The idea of being spoken to in such a manner was enough to upset him completely. He had been wondering how he would communicate with the savage and running over in his mind the various signs he had learned from the guides, signs which he could use whenever he met an Indian who did not understand his language; but to be addressed in finished English was rather more than he had bargained for. The Indian evidently enjoyed his perplexity, for

after looking at him a moment or two he inquired:—

"Do you not think you are running a great risk in coming out here to shoot those little birds, while there are Sioux all around you ready to take your scalp?"

"Who are you?" said Guy, getting the better of his astonishment at last.

"I am Winged Arrow, at your service," replied the Indian.

"Yes; but I don't know any more about you than I did before," returned Guy. "You are not an Indian?"

"A full-blooded one," was the response; and the savage proved that he had been among the soldiers just long enough to learn their ways, for he lifted his right leg and placed it across the horn of his saddle. "Perhaps my English bothers you."

"Well, yes; I confess that that has something to do with it," said Guy, growing more at his ease. "Where have you been to learn so much?"

"I have been at Carlisle. I was a student there for eight years."

"Oh," said Guy, his astonishment being immensely relieved. "But you did not stay there long enough to wash the red out of you."

"It would take more than eight years to do that. I learned the white man's ways, but I could not forget that I was an Indian. What do you fellows want out here anyway? The prairie is broad, and why could you not build a road somewhere else?"

Having got over his astonishment, Guy turned to make a note of the savage and his accoutrements. This was the first Indian he had ever seen close at hand, but as far as he had read or seen at a distance his trappings were all of the savage order. His moccasins, leggings, and hunting shirt, as well as the gaudily ornamented bonnet which he wore upon his head, were all of some squaw's handiwork. There was only one thing about him that

looked any way civilized,—his hair was cut short in regular school-boy fashion. His face would have been a study if Guy had had the opportunity to give it a good looking-over. It was a noble face, and one that could hardly he expected to be found among men or boys of his tribe. How such a face as that should become distorted by passion was something Guy could not understand. The Indian certainly had no weapons about him. If he had, they kept company with Guy's Derringer—safely out of sight.

From the Indian,—or Winged Arrow, he called himself,—Guy turned his attention to his horse; for a horse was something he greatly admired. It was a small horse of sorrel color, but there was a look about him which drew his attention and which he greatly delighted in. The animal stood peaceable enough, but his head was erect, his eyes flashed continually as he glanced around the horizon, and he snuffed as often as he turned toward the Fort, as if he felt the presence of an enemy there.

Guy was satisfied at last to turn his attention to Winged Arrow and hear what else he had to say.

"This land belongs to Congress," began Guy.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but Congress never had a right or never will have a right to own one foot of this ground," said the Indian, speaking with some animation. "It belongs to us, and we are bound to defend it."

"Did we not make a treaty with some of your big men to have the right of way through this country?" said Guy.

"But why did you not take the sense of the nation on it? Red Cloud is a 'big man,' and he is decidedly opposed to it. You have taken one reservation after another from us and the Indian has nothing left. We propose to do as any brave people would do — fight for this country as long as there is a man left. This home is all we have, and we will not give it up until we are whipped. This is the sixth time you have made us promises, and not one of them has been fulfilled."

Guy Preston could not say anything in reply, for he knew that Winged Arrow told him the truth. The Indian then went on to tell of some of those treaties and the way the white man had broken faith with them; and he repeated them as though he were reading from a book. He had the words of Spotted Tail, a chief of the Brule Indians, almost by heart. He said that word came from the Great Father that the white men wanted to "borrow" the right of way from the Indians, and that the promises so made would last fifty years; but it was not true. The next treaty they made was with General Sherman, and they were told that the promises would last for twenty-five years; but it also was not true. The General said that the Indian should have all the land from the White River to the Missouri, cattle, oxen, and wagons to haul logs with, and that they should have $15 as an annuity; but it was false. The white man never came with the goods in his hand to let the Indian see how much he was going to get

for the land he was told to give up, for then their hearts would be glad; but they got the land and forgot all their promises. Winged Arrow's heart was in the matter and for an hour he kept talking, while Guy could only sit still and listen.

"But it seems to me that you are making a big mistake," said he at last, when he saw a chance to crowd a word in edgewise. "What do you want to kill the soldiers for? They are not to blame because somebody has broken faith with you."

"I know that very well," said the Indian, straightening himself up on his horse and raising his hand above his head. "But don't you know that the soldiers are the bulwarks of civilization? The settlers would not come here if it were not for the soldiers. The most of us know that we are going to be whipped in the long run."

"You do know it? Then what have you those clothes on for?"

"Because I am bound to go down with the

rest. I would not give a cent to live here on this prairie unless we could live as we were before."

Guy did not know what reply to make to this. He thought it would be a long time before Winged Arrow and others like him could live as they used to do before the whites came in. There was the buffalo. There was a time when the land all around them was fairly black with the countless throngs, but they had all been slaughtered by the hands of the buffalo hunters, either for their hides or just to make a "record," and no power on earth could bring those throngs back again. Winged Arrow should have seen that, so Guy reasoned with himself, and he did not hesitate to tell him so.

"The buffalo are gone, or rather are going as fast as they can, and you have to give up hunting them and follow the white man's road hereafter," said he earnestly.

"That will never be," said Winged Arrow; and his voice fell almost to a whisper. "There was a time when we thought we could kill

all the white men and then the buffalo would increase; but those of us who have been to the nation's capital know that the thing is just impossible. When the buffalo goes the Indian will go. We are doomed."

Guy Preston had been pretty well aware of that fact for a long time, but this was the first intimation he had ever had of it from an Indian. Winged Arrow seemed to realize it, and his voice grew husky and faint whenever he spoke of it.

"Ah! Those were happy days," said he, looking out over the prairie, as if in the distance he could see the vision he was conjuring up. "Of course I don't remember it, for I was not born then; but I have heard my father tell of it, and I can almost see the things as they happened then. The people obeyed the chief, hunted the buffalo, and were happy."

"Yes"; said Guy. "You were happy when you were on the warpath. You Indians were always fighting."

"Of course. That was fate. The weaker had to give way to the stronger, and that is just what we are doing now. The Indian believes that there are two spirits that rule mortal man, the Good spirit and the Bad. The Good spirit is all the time working for us. He brings us everything that makes man happy. He brings us good weather, plenty of game, and success over our enemies. The Bad spirit is just the reverse. He brings sickness, drives away the game, and makes us miserable in every way he knows how. He has for a time taken advantage of the Good spirit, and that is just what he is doing for us now. Some day the Good spirit will turn around and get the advantage of HIM, but that will be long after my day."

"What do you think will happen then?" asked Guy, who was much interested in what the Indian said to him.

"When that happens you will see a glorious day for the Sioux Indians," said Winged Arrow, growing animated. "The whites will

be driven away from this country forever, I don't know just how it will be done, but it will surely happen; the buffalo will come back, and the Sioux will be monarch of all he surveys."

"I will not live to see that day," said Guy.

"Neither will I; but it is going to take place as sure as the world stands. But I didn't come out here to teach you my religion. You are Methodist or Episcopalian, and probably you will die that way. I came out to warn you."

"To warn me?" echoed Guy. "What about?"

"That there is going to be a massacre here in a few days, and I want you to keep out of it."

"You just bet that I will keep out of it, if I can; but if I should be ordered to be in it —then what?"

"Why, then, there is no help for you. I shall do the same; but you may rest assured that I shall not shoot close to any palefaces. I saw a good many whites while I was gone,

and I can't bear to think of seeing them come to their death."

"Come to their death? Is it going to happen out here on the plains?"

For the first time Winged Arrow straightened around on his horse and looked behind him. There was something so stealthy in his movements that Guy almost involuntarily slipped his right hand to his hip pocket and laid hold of his Derringer.

CHAPTER IV.

The Medicine

Guy Preston turned and looked in the same direction in which the Indian was gazing, but could not see anything to confirm his suspicions. The prairie, as far as he could see it, did not appear as though there was a person on it, but Guy knew better than that. He knew that there was a Sioux warrior within easy reach of him, perhaps at that very minute a rifle was aimed at him or his horse, and that nothing saved him but the presence of Winged Arrow. His face grew a shade paler and his hand trembled as he clutched his Derringer, but his determination was there all the same.

"If I go you will have to go first," said he to himself. "On that I am resolved."

"I see you are armed," said the Indian, turning quickly about and seeing Guy with his right hand behind him. "That shows that I have more faith in you than you have in me. Well, I don't know that I blame you. You fellows with your books and your speakers have somehow got hold of the idea that an Indian has no gratitude, but I have proved the contrary by coming out here to warn you."

"You are a queer sort of an Indian anyhow," said Guy, taking his hand from his hip pocket. "You ought to be a white man."

"I am white in some respects; but with all the lessons I learned at Carlisle, they did not make me forget that I was to the manner born. This country is mine, and those who think as I do will, when we lose it, see the last of Winged Arrow."

"Did you know that this massacre was coming before you came here?" said Guy, who wanted to learn as much as he could about the savages on the plains and in the school?

"If you did, I don't see why your teachers did not warn the authorities."

For a reply Winged Arrow took hold of a little bag which he carried in front of him, lifted the cover and thrust his hand into it. Presently he brought out a folded paper, and after he was certain that he had what he wanted, he passed it over to Guy.

"That was the letter I received inviting me to come home," said he. "What do you make out of it?"

Guy took the letter, but he could not see any writing on it. On the extreme left was an arrow furnished with wings, and a little further to the right was a hand with the forefinger extended as if beckoning to the arrow to hasten his coming. On the right, and a little below this beckoning hand, was an Indian tepee with a buffalo grazing beside it. Although the drawing was evidently done by an unpracticed hand, it was so plain that anybody could tell what it was. With the aid of a few colored pencils, which the drawer had

begged or borrowed from the officers of the Fort, he had made the characters of different tints, so that they resembled nature in a wonderful degree. Some distance lower down and plainly a different picture was a bow and a quiver of arrows which another hand was extending toward Winged Arrow, and further back of it was a riderless horse with his mane and tail flying in the wind.

"My father drew all that, and it is just as plain to me as daylight," said the Indian, who was closely watching the young officer's face.

"There is something red descending from that hand," said Guy. "What is it intended to represent?"

"That tells about the massacre that is coming, and he wants me here to take part in it," replied Winged Arrow.

"And are you going to do it?"

"I shall probably be in it, but the bullet from my rifle will not kill any paleface," said the savage. "That much Indian has been washed out of me. I can't do it."

"Bully for you," said Guy, riding his horse up closer to Winged Arrow and thrusting out his hand to him. "I bet you—"

"You must not shake hands with me," exclaimed the Indian, drawing back. "There are too many on the watch."

"Do you pretend to say that there are some Indians watching me now?" exclaimed Guy.

"Certainly there are. You have been within reach of two ever since you came over that ridge."

"Then I must go back," said the young officer, who cast anxious glances on all sides of him. "What is the reason they didn't shoot me down or make a prisoner of me? Say! What's your name? You must have had some cognomen besides your Indian name to designate you by when at school."

"My name is John Turner, and the boys called me Winged Arrow because I was so fleet in running foot races. I called myself after the janitor of the school. He was always good to Indians, believed that we have been

abused, and said if he were President he would not have permitted things to go on in this way. If he were here now we would do our best to capture him, and after we got him we would send him out of the country."

"But what was your object in selecting ME to warn ME of the massacre? There are plenty of others who, just like myself, do not believe in this business."

"And any one of them would have done just as well. From the day on which you left Fort Robinson in Nebraska—"

"Have you followed us all the way from there?" asked Guy, in surprise.

The Indian nodded his head.

"Why, I should have thought you would have attacked us before this time."

"There were too many of you. An Indian does not like to be killed any better than a white man. Ever since you left that fort I have been watching you—you see I could always tell you by the horse you rode—and I decided that if I could catch you out alone I

would tell you of the massacre that is surely coming."

"When is it coming off?"

"It will be when we get some of you where you cannot defend yourselves. We will kill fifty or a hundred of you soldiers, and then we will do what we please with the Fort."

"Well, by George! When you attempt that, I hope you will get whipped for your pains."

Guy was angry now, and he said just what he thought.

"American soldiers are not the men to give way before a handful of savages," he continued.

"A handful of savages! How many do you suppose there are watching you night and day?" asked Winged Arrow; and his eyes flashed and he clenched his hands nervously together.

"Well, I suppose you have a great many; but it will take more men than you can raise to whip us out. I presume you have a thousand."

"Say three thousand and you will hit it. And there are more coming in every day. Now I will tell you what is a fact: You have never seen an Indian war yet."

"I know that. I have never seen any."

"After you have seen one you will never want to see another. A battlefield is something awful to look at."

"I have seen the soldiers that you Indians killed and mutilated since we have been here, and I guess I know something about them. When you have killed a man, why don't you let him alone?"

"If I tell you, you would not believe it,—because it is a part of our religious ceremony. The little scrimmages you saw are nothing to the scene presented by a regular battlefield. Are you going now? Well, I will trouble you for that letter."

Guy had unconsciously held fast to the letter which Winged Arrow had given him, intending to keep it as a souvenir of his meeting with the young savage; but he was so angry

at some things that had been said that he had forgotten all about it. He accordingly returned the letter saying as he did so:—

"I wish you would let me keep that document to remind me of you. If I tell what I have seen and heard out here the officers will all laugh at me and say I dreamed it all. I want it too to bear in mind that the first Indian I ever talked with warned me to look out for that massacre which you say is surely coming."

"Well, take it along," said the Indian, after thinking a moment. "It is of no use to me, and it may be the means of saving your life."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You will excuse me if I do not say any more. Perhaps you will see that an Indian has some gratitude after all."

Guy Preston wanted very much to hear more about that letter saving his life, but Winged Arrow put his horse in motion and rode toward the top of the swell behind which

the Fort lay. Guy wanted to tell him that he had better go back, but the savage rode on with his eyes fastened upon the horn of his saddle, apparently very much occupied with his own thoughts. Finally he stopped and looked inquiringly at Guy.

"Are you not going to pick up your shot-gun?" he asked.

"Yes; when I come to it," said Guy.

"You would not make a good hand to live on the plains," replied Winged Arrow, with a grin; "here it is."

The young officer looked, and there were his gun and birds just as he left them. He did not forget to thank Winged Arrow for calling his attention to them, and said, as he jumped off and secured his gun: —

"I am afraid to have you go any further toward the Fort. We have some guns trained on this ridge. I know they are accurate, for I helped to train them myself."

"I will stop when I have gone far enough," said Winged Arrow. "Do you see that little

tuft of grass up there on the hill? There is an Indian in there."

"By George! And I rode within twenty feet of that tuft of grass when I came down," stammered Guy, "What had I better do?"

"Keep right ahead and say nothing about it. He will not disturb you. Now I guess I have gone far enough, and I will say good-by. Remember what I have told you about that massacre. Keep that letter about your uniform wherever you go. I must not shake hands with you."

Guy Preston was just as eager now to get over on the other side of the ridge as his horse was to carry him there. Tom snorted loudly as the tainted air fell upon his nostrils, and even showed a desire to go toward the Fort at the top of his speed, but the strong curb held him. Guy had heard one of the guides say that his horse could smell an Indian further than he could see him, and that when camping alone he always felt perfectly easy until his steed began to show

signs of alarm, and at that moment he thought it best to seek safety in flight; and Guy did not dispute the story. He said good-by with some uneasiness, gathered his reins firmly in his hands and cast anxious glances toward the tuft of grass, but nothing in the shape of a savage could he see. Finally the flag came in sight and a few seconds afterward the log palisades, and then Guy felt safe. He loosened up on the curb, and in an instant the horse responded to it. The young officer told himself that he had never traveled so swiftly on horseback before. He approached the gate at a rapid run, returned the sentry's salute of welcome, and presently dismounted in front of the Colonel's quarters. He drew a long breath of relief, for he was safe for the time being.

CHAPTER V.

The Reprimand

"What luck have you had?" said Perkins, who had stood by the sentry when Guy dashed by and now came up to see how much game he had secured during his wild ride. "Say! the officer of the guard is just waiting to give you fits. You know the orders are that you must not gallop into the Fort unless there is something after you. Why, where have you been?" he added, now for the first time noticing how white the young officer's face was. "Did you see any Sioux?"

"Perk, I never was so glad to get inside of a stockade before," replied Guy, handing his gun to his friend, removing his cap and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "Yes, sir; I have seen a Sioux Indian and I was closer to him than I cared to be."

"Did he shoot at you?"

"No, but he said something to me."

"What did he say?"

"He told me to look out for the massacre that is coming in a few days."

"Aw! Get out!" exclaimed Perkins. "It is very likely that a Sioux would tell you that, isn't it now? Go and dream something else."

At this moment an Orderly stepped up and, after saluting, informed Guy that the officer of the day wanted to see him right away. Guy handed his reins to Perkins and started to obey.

"Wait until I receive my reprimand and then I will tell you all about it," said he. "I am telling you the truth. I met him just on the other side of that hill."

Guy followed the Orderly to the quarters of the officer of the day and found that gentleman there alone. His face wore a fierce frown as he turned about in his chair and confronted the young officer.

I have got back, sir," said Guy, raising his hand to his cap.

"So I perceive," responded Captain Kendall. "You have disobeyed orders twice since you have been gone."

"I know it, sir, and I am willing to take the scolding which I deserve for the first one, but if you knew all the circumstances you would not reprimand me for the second. I couldn't help it, sir. My horse got away from me."

The young officer's air, taken in connection with his pale face, made his superior think there was something back of it, so he crossed his legs, settled down in his chair and requested him to go on, and state what the horse had seen to frighten him. Guy hardly knew how to begin, for he was satisfied that he could not make the officer believe it.

"I followed two of those birds, but the second one got away from me and flew over the ridge, sir," said Guy.

"We are well aware of that fact," said the officer of the day. "That was the time when

you should have faced about and returned to the Fort."

"I know it, sir, and I confess to my weakness there; but what kept me so long was an interview I had with a Sioux warrior on the other side of the ridge."

The officer of the day began to prick up his ears when he heard this. He straightened up a little in his chair and simply nodded his head as if to tell Guy that he could go on. And Guy went on. He related the whole of his interview with Winged Arrow without interruption from the officer, and when he got through he showed him the letter which the young savage had given him. He explained the crimson drops which were represented as falling from the hand that was beckoning to Winged Arrow to come home.

"That tells of the massacre that is to come, sir," said he. "They have shot twenty of our men since we have been here at the Fort, but Winged Arrow says this represents more than that."

"Why, they must be going to kill us all off," said the officer.

"It certainly looks that way, sir, and he says if I see one battlefield I will never want to see another."

"And he gave it to you to save your life?" continued the Captain.

"That is what he told me, sir. He told me to keep it about my uniform wherever I went."

"Perhaps the Colonel had better see this," said the Captain, after a moment's pause. "But I shall have to come down on you hard to pay you for going over the other side of the ridge."

"I know it, sir. I ought to have come back then."

"Well, the next time the Colonel trusts you, be sure and obey all orders to the very letter. Now we will go and see what he has to say about it."

Guy felt better than he did when he came into that room a little while ago. Captain

Kendall was noted for "coming down hard" on both officers and men who did not obey the law, and so far Guy was all right; but how was he going to fare when he saw the Colonel? He followed the officer as he walked toward the office, and looked all around to see if he could find Perkins or some of his roommates who would see him on the way there. He saw Perkins, still holding fast to his horse, and when the officer of the day was not looking toward him, he pulled off his hat and took hold of his hair as if to show Guy that he was now about to get a reprimand for going over the ridge. The officer sent in his name by the Orderly and found the Colonel pacing back and forth as he had seen him on a previous occasion. He faced about, took one hand from behind him, and pointed it at Guy.

"What do you mean, sir, by coming into the Fort as if all the Sioux were close at your heels?" said he.

"Colonel, if you will permit me, I should be

glad to explain that thing," said Captain Kendall; "here is a letter that tells all about it."

"Sit down, Captain, and that boy can stand there until I get ready to talk to him," said the Colonel. "Where did you find this letter, sir?"

Captain Kendall made answer for him, and it was not long before the frown on his face vanished and a troubled expression came to take its place.

"The next time we send out a party for wood is when the massacre is going to take place," said he, when the Captain had explained everything. "We must be on the lookout for that. Have you told this boy what you think of him for going over the other side of the ridge?"

"Yes, sir. I have told him all about it."

"Then you may go."

Guy Preston was in no hurry to go just then, for there was Winged Arrow's letter which the Colonel did not show any signs of returning to him. He sat with his eyes fas-

tened upon it, and then Guy looked at the officer of the day. The latter gave him a wink as if to say that it was all right, the Orderly opened the door for him, and Guy went out. Perkins still kept charge of the horse, and Guy went toward him. It was against the law for an officer to hire or appoint an enlisted man to act as his groom, and so every officer had to take charge of his horse himself. But the thing was done in spite of orders and is done yet. Most men are not backward in regard to earning a quarter for rubbing down a horse in time for dress parade, and many a coin which the officers earn slips into their pockets. They do this when there is no officer about. The minute the officer of the day or guard appears upon the scene, they grab the brush and the officer finds them at work grooming their horses. Perkins would have stayed there until he was gray headed, for Guy had told him just enough of his adventures to want to make him hear more, and he knew that he

would have to come there after his horse. He had gathered the rest of his roommates about him, and they were all impatient for Guy's appearance.

"Here he comes now," exclaimed Arthur Brigham, one of the four who were fresh from "The Point." "Now we will make him confess that he is making that story all up out of his own head."

"You will not make me go back on a single word that I have said," said Guy, taking his reins and gun from Perkins's hand. "Come in with me until I rub down my horse and I will tell you all about it."

"But, Guy, did you really see an Indian and converse with him?" asked another.

"I did, as sure as you're a foot high. He was a splendid-looking fellow, and talked English better than I did."

"Oh, get out," said Arthur. "What chance had he to learn English?"

"He says he has been to school for eight years. He knows all the treaties by heart."

"Oh, well, that accounts for it. How was he dressed?"

While Guy was leading his horse toward the stable, he was plied with such questions as these, and he hardly knew it when the soldier who now and then acted as his groom, took the reins from his hand, led the horse to his place, and removed the saddle and bridle from him. Guy leaned upon his gun while all the rest of the boys, except Perkins, crowded about him to hear some more of his story. Perkins remained near the door to keep an eye on the parade ground. He did not intend to let the officer of the day catch a soldier grooming Guy's horse.

"Begin at the beginning and tell us all about it," said Arthur. "You say he was a smart chap?"

"The smartest I ever saw wrapped up in the hide of an Indian," said Guy; "he saluted me as if he had been in the army all his life, and the language with which he addressed me fairly took my breath away. I didn't know what to say to him in reply."

"Look out, boys," said Perkins in a whisper; "here comes Kendall."

The boys vanished as if by magic. Guy peeled off his coat, took the brush from the hands of the soldier, and, striking up a whistle, proceeded to rub down his horse; the others went, some to examine their bridles and some to give their nags a good looking-over, and not another word was said. Captain Kendall came in and walked the whole length of the stable without any remark and then went out; but the moment he disappeared the soldier took the brush, and the young officers gathered about Guy again. Not a word was said about the joke they had played upon Captain Kendall. Such scenes were an every-day occurrence.

"What was in that letter he gave you?" asked Perkins.

"That letter won't do me much good," replied Guy, with a discontented look; "the Colonel's got it and I guess he means to keep it."

"Not if it is going to save your life," said one of his roommates.

"But how is it going to do that? I must first fall into the hands of the Sioux, and I don't want to do that, I bet you. I have not forgotten those men that they killed."

"I will tell you what let's do," said Perkins. "Let's go and see Cyrus. He will know whether or not there is anything to it."

This the boys decided to do; and when the soldier had finished grooming the horse, they came out and turned their steps toward the guide's headquarters.

CHAPTER VI.

The Bundle of Sage Brush

"By the way," said Lieutenant Perkins, before they had gone many steps on their road, "who is this young fellow, Winged Arrow, or whatever you call him, anyway? Was he richly dressed?"

"I don't see what his clothes had to do with that," said Arthur. "Of course he was richly dressed, if it took the last cent he had. An Indian will put all he has on his back, even if his stomach goes empty."

"This fellow didn't, I tell you," said Guy. "The most I could see of his uniform was buckskin; and it was fixed up in a way that must have taken some squaw a year or more to turn it out so neatly. I saw his pants, or a portion of them that was not covered up by his leggings, and they were the

costliest kind of broadcloth; much better than those we wear,—we mounted Lieutenants who draw $1500 a year."

"I wonder if his father is rich," said Perkins.

"There!" exclaimed Guy. "I knew there was something I had forgotten. I never thought to ask him who his father was."

"You made a mistake there," said Arthur. "He must be a man of some note in the tribe, or his son would not be allowed to meet an enemy on the lines. You say that there were Sioux watching you all the time?"

"Yes, and he showed me the hiding place of one of them; but you might as well look for a needle in a haystack as to try to make him out. My horse smelled him, however, and that was the reason he ran away with me."

The boys had by this time reached the guide's headquarters, and there they found the man of whom they were in search sitting on an empty cracker box, smoking his pipe. We ought rather to have said "the boy," for Cyrus

was about their own age. No one knew what his other name was, whether Cyrus was his given or surname, and, as he did not volunteer the information, no one cared to ask him. He had been born on the plains, for no one could have learned so much unless he had been; and the boys had told one another confidentially that there was a story back of it. He was talkative enough whenever he was approached on any other subject, but the moment they tried to pry into his parentage Cyrus closed his mouth and would say nothing more. He was very friendly with all the young officers, accepted the cigars and tobacco which they offered him, and gave them "points" when they went out on a scout after Indians; but who his father was was a question he would not answer. He was taller than any boy in the party, and the muscles on his arms were something to wonder at.

"Halloo!" said he, knocking the ashes from his pipe and filling up for a fresh smoke, "Guy got a reprimand. I can see it plainly enough.

Why didn't you obey the Adjutant's orders, and come in when your game flew off over the ridge?"

"Well, there is once that you are mistaken," said Guy. "I told the officer of the day just why I did not come back, and he said that the next time the Colonel trusted me I was to do just as I was told."

"Kendall is the officer of the day, is he not?" replied Cyrus. "That is the first time I ever knew of him letting a young officer off so easily. You must have seen something over there."

"Yes, I did; and I want to know if you ever heard of, or have seen something, I don't care what it was, which was given to a white man that would save his life if he were to fall into the hands of the Sioux?"

"I certainly have," replied Cyrus.

"What was it?" asked all the boys at once.

"Have you found such a thing?"

"No; but I had something given to me. It was a letter which Winged Arrow's father had written to him to come home."

"Where is the letter?"

"The Colonel's got it and I don't know whether he means to give it up or not. I tell you it put him on nettles too. It tells of a massacre that is to come off very shortly. The Colonel says that the next time we go out after a load of wood we have got to look out."

"I know pretty nearly all the Sioux that there are in that camp, but I never heard of Winged Arrow before," said Cyrus. "What sort of a looking chap was he? Tell me all about the history of that letter, and then I will tell you some more."

Once more Guy began and told his story, and Cyrus seemed to take it all as a matter of course, for he never expressed surprise at anything the young officer told him. When Guy had finished his tale, Cyrus lighted his pipe and sat with his elbows on his knees, looking thoughtfully at the floor.

"So it seems that we young officers have got some friends in the camp of the Sioux

all unbeknown to us," said Guy, after waiting for Cyrus to say something. "They don't want us all killed off."

"Well, that stands to reason," said Cyrus. "This Winged Arrow has been under instruction of white people all the time for eight years, as you say, and he doesn't want to see any of your kind hurt. That letter will save the life of anybody who falls into the hands of the Sioux."

"Do you know that to be a fact?" asked Arthur, who, like all the rest of the party, was greatly astonished.

"Yes, sir; I know it is so," said Cyrus, emphatically. "Mine was saved once by a simple bunch of sage brush which I had in one of my pockets."

"Oh, go on and tell us all about it," chorused the boys, looking around for some place to sit down. "I don't see what there could have been in a lot of sage brush to save your life."

"It is not a long story, so you need not get ready for an all night's entertainment," re-

turned Cyrus. "You know I have always been kind of friendly toward the Indians; whether Sioux or Pawnee, it made no sort of difference to me, for I live a good deal like them myself. About two years ago we had some war on with the Sioux, about some land, of course, and I was off scouting by myself to see what I could find. I was not attached to any post then. One day I was within hearing of a tremendous fight that came off between our fellows and the Sioux, but I did not go near the battlefield until it was all over. The next day I went up and found that our men had been victorious. The dead and wounded Indians were buried where they had fallen, and our own people had disappeared. They had been carried away by our fellows so that the reds could not dig them up and mutilate them.

"I was just about mounting my horse to go on again, when I heard a groan coming from a thicket close at my side, mingled with the cries in the Sioux tongue of 'Water! Water!'

I tell you I did not feel safe in going up to find out what the matter was, for the Indians, even though they are wounded unto death, have a way of keeping a weapon in their hands ready to be the death of any one who comes near them; but finally I made out to see the man, and there was not anything in the shape of a revolver or knife near him. He was shot through both hips, but had managed to drag himself out of sight there in the thicket where he had lain undisturbed by our forces when they were burying the dead. When I came up to him he held out his hands piteously and begged for water. He saw that I was supplied, for he had his eyes on my canteen, and although somebody might call me a fool for doing it, I took it off and gave it to him. He was a human being and somehow I could not bear to knock him in the head. He seemed greatly surprised at that, and grateful too; and after a little while I began a conversation with him. He told me that he had been shot out there on the plains,

but had dragged himself to those bushes without a weapon of any kind, and that nothing remained for him but to lie there and die. Of course I could not do anything for him, for he was shot in such a way that he could not sit upright on a horse. I left him the little grub I had and promised that if I could find any one to send after him, I would do it; but that was all in my one eye. I supposed when I left him it would be the last of him.

"Just as I was about to get on my horse and ride away from him, he thrust his hand into his medicine sack and drew out something wrapped up in buckskin, which he held toward me. I said nothing, but took it, and when I was a little way off I unrolled the thing, and found that I had a handful of sage grass. My first impulse was to drop it, for I did not believe that it would be of any use to me; but in time I happened to remember that such things HAD served prisoners in some way or another and saved their lives."

"Why, how would it do that?" said Arthur.

"I do not know," replied Cyrus, "whether it is a sign from one Indian to another, or some medicine which they think will protect anybody who has it,—it is beyond me quite. It did not protect this Indian; for if it had, the white man's bullet that shot him through the hips would have been turned away and never hit him at all. Well, I took it, put it in one of my pockets, and started on the trail of our forces, intending to overtake them as soon as I could, when the first thing I knew I ran plump into a squad of about twenty warriors; or, rather, they ran into me, for they came over a hill and surrounded me before I could think twice. 'Well,' said I, 'You are gone up this time. It is no use trying to get away, but some of these savages will go before you do.' So I cut loose with my rifle—"

"Do you mean to say that you shot while the Indians were all around you?" exclaimed Guy in astonishment.

"Certainly," replied Cyrus. "I supposed that if I was caught alive, there could be only one case for me, and that was to be tortured, so I determined to do what damage I could before I went. I got two of the warriors, and I did not make any mistake about it either, and then somebody shot my horse through the head and I came to the ground. Before I could say 'General Jackson,' I was disarmed and my hands tied behind my back. I was done for at last."

The boys waited impatiently for Cyrus to go on with his story, but he leaned his elbows on his knees and took a few long pulls at his pipe. At length Guy began to grow indignant.

"Well, it seems as though the Indians left a great deal of you, if they did burn you to death," said he. "Didn't they leave enough of you to finish your tale?"

Cyrus laughed heartily.

"I was just going over in my mind the way things happened there during the next few

minutes," said he, when he had sobered down. "They all began shouting at once, and I knew by the noise they made that we were safe from our boys, and that I had nobody to rescue me. Some began shouting out one thing and some another, but I knew from what they said that they were in favor of disposing of me at once, because they did not think it safe to take me to their village. They put a lariat around my neck, jumped on their horses and started for a little grove of willows about five miles off; and although I was a pretty fair runner, I was completely whipped by the time we got there. I tried my level best to make them listen to me, but I might as well have shouted against the roar of Niagara. When we got to the willows I could not say a word. They untied my hands and while some proceeded to cut the fuel with which they were about to torture me, the others peeled off my clothes; and they went into every pocket to see what I had that was worth stealing. Presently one of them took up my pants which

had my pipe, tobacco, and money in them, and the first thing he drew out was that roll of buckskin which contained the sage brush that the wounded Indian had given me. The grunt he gave when he unrolled it was enough to bring all the Indians about him. The shouting instantly ceased. They examined the sage brush, turned it on all sides to see if there was anything more with it, and at last looked at me.

"'Have you fellows got so that you can listen to a white man at last?' said I, 'I know where I got that, and who gave it to me. If you will go with me I will show him to you.'

"They could understand me well enough when they were not shouting so as to drown my words. One of them, who spoke a little better English than the rest, ordered me to tell my story; but I told him that I could speak his own language better than he could, and so spoke to him in his own dialect. When I got through they wanted to hold a consulta-

tion and they drew off several feet, this time leaving me untied. When they came back they allowed me to put on my clothes and told me to lead them to their wounded comrade. If I had been a tenderfoot then I should have been in a fix, for the prairie on all sides looked the same; but there were certain little landmarks which I remembered, and in process of time I brought them to the bush which concealed the man of whom I was in search. One would have thought from the anxiety they showed to meet the man, that there would have been a big jubilee over finding him; but they did not act so at all. They simply exchanged a few words with him and then came back to me. My horse, weapons, and every thing I had lost by them was restored, all except my sage brush, which I wanted more than I did anything else. Then they told me I could go; and I lost no time in getting out of there. That letter of yours, Lieutenant, might do the same thing for any one who happened to have it about him; and for that

reason I would like to see it. Don't you think the Colonel would give it up if you asked him?"

Cyrus, who had allowed his pipe to go out while he was talking, struck a match on the floor and turned toward Guy for an answer.

CHAPTER VII.

"GOOD-BY CYRUS"

"AND do you really believe that that bit of sage brush, which anyone could have picked up on the prairie, was the means of saving your life?" inquired Guy, when Cyrus ceased speaking.

"Or it may have been the water and food you gave him," said Arthur. "Almost anybody would have been grateful for that."

"No, it was the sage brush," said Cyrus earnestly. "The Indians carried it with them when they went to the wounded man and showed it to him before they told me that I could go. He exchanged a few words with them in tones so low that I could not overhear them, and after that they came to their decision regarding me. I say it was the sage brush and nothing else."

"Guy," said one of his roommates, "you must get that letter. Cyrus wants to see it."

"It is not that so much as I want it to help me in something I am going to do to-night," said Cyrus. "I don't want you boys to say anything about it, but I am going to try to get those dispatches to Fort Robinson as soon as it becomes dark."

The young officers were really surprised now. Here was a boy who was about to take the same chances that two of their most trusted scouts had attempted only a short time before, and he knew that he was going to fall into the hands of the Sioux before he got through. For a minute or two no one spoke. They looked at Cyrus and then at one another, and finally shook their heads as if the matter was too deep for them to understand.

"I am going to try it to-night," said Cyrus, and for the first time in their lives the boys saw him put on a determined look, which revealed more of the boy's character than they

had ever dreamed of. Cyrus had pluck in him; there were no two ways about that. "If I fail, as a good many better men than I have, who have tried it, it will be the last you will ever see of me."

"But, Cyrus, how do you know that the letter will prove an advantage to you?" asked Guy. "You seem to be depending upon something that none of us ever supposed that a Sioux had; I mean gratitude."

"Oh, I know the way your speakers and writers of books have ventilated their opinions on that subject, but I will tell you that gratitude is a thing that Indians have as well as white men," said Cyrus, getting upon his feet and pacing the floor. "You call an Indian a savage, and say that everybody who falls into his hands is booked for Davy's locker sure enough; but some of them have hearts. If the Colonel would let me, I would not be afraid to take Guy's letter and go into the Sioux camp this very minute."

"Well, you have more faith in them than I

have," said Guy, astonished by the proposition, "You go into the Sioux camp to-night and we will never hear any more stories from you; you can bet on that."

"Somebody has to take the risk, and since the Colonel has been to me, I can't well refuse. We shall all be massacred if we stay here, and if some one has got to die in order to save the rest, it might as well be myself as anybody. Guy, will you get the letter for me?"

"Certainly," said the officer, who had never heard Cyrus speak in such a tone of voice before. "It is my letter and I must have it."

"Don't say anything to him about what I have told you," said Cyrus. "I am disobeying orders by telling you, and you must keep my secret."

After the boys had all promised to be careful, Guy Preston came out and turned toward the Colonel's quarters. He heard the invitation in the commandant's voice, "Tell him to come in," and Guy entered and found the offi-

cer pacing up and down his narrow room as he had seen him twice before. Indeed he did not appear to have anything else to do. He wanted to find some way of getting out of the predicament he was in, and he hoped by walking the floor that something would occur to him.

"Sit down, Mr. Preston," said he.

"Thank you, sir, but I don't want to stop long," was the reply. "I gave you a letter which Winged Arrow gave to me, and you have not returned it. The young savage wanted me to keep that letter in my uniform wherever I went, thinking it might be of service to me if I were captured."

"Why, you don't expect to fall into the power of the Sioux, do you?" said the Colonel with a smile.

"No, sir, I don't expect to, but there is no telling what may happen."

"I thought I would send that in making out my report," said the officer. "If you don't mind, that is what I will do with it."

Guy was astonished and greatly alarmed when he heard this. Aside from the protection which the letter might afford him, there was Cyrus who was particularly anxious to have it, in view of the perilous undertaking which the passing of the hours was rapidly bringing toward him. Cyrus was a favorite with all the officers and men, and he must have the letter if there were any way to bring it about. He did not believe in such things, but Cyrus did, and he thought that the mention of his name would help matters a little.

"I have been talking to Cyrus about it, and he wants to see it," said he, at a venture.

"Oh, Cyrus," exclaimed the Colonel, rising to his feet and going to his desk, "That puts a different look on the affair. I suppose that when he is done with the letter that you will bring it back."

"Yes, sir; when he IS DONE with it," replied Guy, extending his hand for the document.

The Colonel evidently did not notice the emphasis he placed upon the verb, for if he

had he would have asked him to explain. He handed out the letter, and, after thanking him for it, Guy put on his cap and left the room.

"I said when he was DONE with it I would return it," said he to himself, as he ran across the parade ground, "that will be after the letter has served his purpose. I hope it will assist him in getting out of the hands of those rascally Sioux, if he is unfortunate enough to fall into them; but I don't know. I would rather see our regiment drawn up with sabers in their hands than to believe in this thing."

Cyrus was in the quarters alone. The young officers having thought of various duties they had yet to perform, had gone away to attend to them. He received the letter with a smile and gave it a good looking-over. "It WAS drawn by an Indian," he remarked, as he folded up the letter and placed it in his pocket.

"Now when you are all through with that, you must give it back to the Colonel," said

Guy, "I have promised him that. But it seems to me that you are relying on a poor prop."

"You probably get your notions of Indians from some books that you have read," replied Cyrus. "I never have heard of a war yet in which some prisoner, either white man or savage, did not owe his life to some such thing as this. You never see anything about it in print, because the majority of people they capture are not high enough up to believe in such foolish ideas. They don't believe that because a thing is senseless and can't speak, that it will be of any benefit to them; but you ask some men, who have been out here on the prairie all their lives and have associated with Indians more than they have with the whites, what they think of these things. They will tell you that there is more faith to be put in them than in a regiment of soldiers."

Guy was amazed to hear Cyrus talk in this way. He grew animated and talked like some one who had been through all the books

at school, and, furthermore, his words carried weight with them. Guy was encouraged. He hoped that Cyrus would get through in safety with his dispatches, or, failing that, the letter would take him through the hostile ranks of the Sioux and bring him unharmed back to them.

"You talk as though you were not going through," said he, not knowing what else to say.

"Well, those two men who tried it the other night were well up in all that relates to the Indians and the prairie on which they live, and if they did not get through there is a small chance for me. Now I want to lie down and take a little sleep, and when the Orderly comes he will know where to find me."

"I may not see you again and so I will bid you good-by," said Guy, who felt that he was parting from an older brother. He thrust out his hand, and Cyrus took it and clasped it warmly. Not another word was said. The officer put on his hat and left the quarters.

"Don't I wish that I had half the pluck that that man has?" said he to himself. "If that were all, he would hoodwink the savages in some way; but they are too many for him. Good-by Cyrus. I will never see you again."

It was a long night to Guy Preston and his two companions who were with him — two of them were on duty and they did not see much of them — and when the next day came it was harder than ever, for they were obliged to pretend ignorance of Cyrus's whereabouts. When he got up Guy passed the time until breakfast in attending to such duties as were before him, and then he drew a bee line for the guide's headquarters. He wanted to see if anybody there knew anything of Cyrus.

"You tell where Cyrus is," said Tony, who was taking his after-breakfast smoke. "When I went to bed he lay right there; but when I got up this morning his bunk was empty."

"It is my opinion that he has gone off with the dispatches that we failed to get through

with the night we tried it," said Mike, who was Tony's partner on that unsuccessful expedition.

"Good land! He can't get through," exclaimed Tony. "I tell you, Lieutenant, the Sioux are thicker than blackberries in a New England pasture out there. Whichever way we turned we saw something to drive us back. The Kurn knows mighty well that we would have gone on if we had seen the ghost of a chance to get through, because all the men here are in the same fix that we are; but what are you going to do when every tuft of grass you look at turns out to be an enemy?"

"Could you see the Sioux?" asked Guy.

"No; but our horses smelled them, and that was enough for us. Whenever they stopped and looked before them with cocked ears and snorted, we went back and tried some other way; but it was the same all around the camp. But I am mighty sorry to lose Cyrus. He was the best fellow in camp."

"Certain. If he isn't captured, the Sioux will drive him back. There's one thing that I have got against him," said the other scout. "He has left his horse behind him. If I had had anything to do with his going away, I should have told him to be sure and take that pony."

Until very recently Guy did not believe that a white man's horse could scent an Indian further than he could see him, but he did believe it now. His experience with his excited horse the morning before had confirmed the story.

"A white man's horse won't go up to an Indian that is lying in the grass," continued the scout. "He will turn out and go some other way; and an Indian's pony acts just the same way with a white man. The horses enter into the spirit of the matter and hate a foe as heartily as their riders do."

Guy had heard all he wanted to hear about Cyrus's disappearance, and returned to his room to get ready for guard mount, for he

was to go on duty then. Not one of his roommates could tell him a single thing he had not learned already. No one knew when Cyrus went away, and the only thing for them to do was to wait patiently for two or three days, or until they could hear from Cyrus direct. Guy was glad to have some duties to perform, because they kept him on the move and he did not have as much time to think as he did when left to himself.

At twelve o'clock his relief came on and, after eating his dinner, Guy went into his room and laid down to get a wink of sleep to prepare him for the mid-watch which came on at six o'clock; but it seemed to him that he had scarcely closed his eyes when he was aroused by the long roll and the hurrying of feet outside his quarters. To get up, pull on his boots, seize his coat with one hand and his sword with the other was done in less time than we take to write it, and Guy rushed out to find his company rapidly falling in on the parade ground. Perkins came up at the same

instant, and met Guy with some encouraging words.

"The massacre has come and in much less time than Winged Arrow thought it would," said he. "Now where is your letter?"

Guy did not have time to answer, for the sharp voice of the Colonel was heard ordering them to their stations. When Guy got up on the palisade and took his position in readiness to defend the gun which was pointed toward a distant swell, he had opportunity to look about him.

"All ready with that gun?" asked the officer in command.

"All ready, sir," replied the Captain of the piece, squinting along the gun to make sure that it covered the hill. "I can knock the last one of that group if I can get orders to fire now, sir."

Guy looked toward the swell and saw a party of half a dozen warriors there, all of whom were mounted save one. He had just time to note this fact when he saw the dismounted

man start down the swell toward the Fort, while the others of the group disappeared behind the hill. The man was plainly a prisoner and had been liberated. Guy's heart seemed to beat loudly as he drew nearer to the officer who commanded the gun and said, in a scarcely audible whisper:—

"Is that Cyrus, sir?"

The man who had a glass removed it from his eyes long enough to stare blankly at Guy, and then, as if getting something through his head, he leveled the glass once more and said, while he caught a momentary glimpse of the figure:—

"By George! I believe you are right."

CHAPTER VIII.

In the Hands of the Sioux

The excuse that Cyrus made, that he wanted to lie down and get a wink of sleep before the Colonel's Orderly came to find him, was merely a pretense to get rid of the officer, and nothing else. When Guy went out he lay down on his bunk, but he did not stay there more than five minutes. No one came in to bother him, and Cyrus, thinking that as good a time to reach the Colonel's quarters without attracting the attention of anybody, got up and, by keeping close to the palisades and behind the out-buildings, drew up at last before one of the windows of the commanding officer's room. It really was not a window at all, but an opening left in the logs and covered with a piece of muslin so as to admit the light. He listened, but could hear

nothing but the steady tramp of the Colonel as he paced back and forth in his room. Then he raised his hand and with his knuckles gave a peculiar rap on the casement. A moment afterward the corner of the piece of muslin was drawn aside and the Colonel's face appeared.

"I am here," said Cyrus. "I want those dispatches that you have ready for me."

"Come in," said the commanding officer, and with a few moves he drew the tacks which confined the window and made a hole large enough for Cyrus to squeeze his broad shoulders through.

"Have you a needle and thread?" asked Cyrus.

"Yes, everything is all handy. You sit down here in my bedroom, and if any of the officers come in to see me they will be none the wiser for it."

Cyrus seated himself in one of the spots which the Colonel pointed out to him — it was not a chair, however, but an empty box

which had once contained canned beef — and pulled off his buckskin jacket, while the Colonel went into the next room and presently returned with the dispatches for which the boy was about to run so much risk. It was a very small package, but there was a great deal written on it. It conveyed to the Commanding General the information that the Colonel had succeeded in building Fort Phil Kearney, but instead of using it as a basis for movements against the hostile Indians, the Sioux had shut him up in it, hoping that when their ammunition and provisions gave out, they could make a raid and destroy every man there was in the Fort. His condition was perilous in the extreme. Every wagon train that he sent out for fuel was protected by a large force, and if the Sioux were smart enough to cut off one of those forces, or get between them and the Fort, thus dividing his men, the annihilation of all of them would be a matter of hours and not of days. He begged earnestly for re-enforcements of five hundred

men, and he could do nothing until such force arrived.

"I wish the General could be here for about five minutes and see just how we are situated," said the Colonel, as he placed the dispatch on the table by the side of Cyrus. "He would learn better than to send out such a small body of troops as mine to confront the whole tribe of Sioux Indians. Cyrus, I hope you will get through with that dispatch."

"Kurn, if any living man can accomplish it, I can," said the scout. "Now, have you got the other dispatch ready?"

"Yes, but I don't place any faith in that. If you are caught the savages will strip you—"

"And this dispatch will be the only one they will find. Our fellows fooled the rebels more than once by carrying concealed papers—"

"But rebels and Indians are two different things. To be honest, I do not think that you will be able to get through; but if you do,

talk to that General as you would to a father. You can tell him more in regard to our situation here than I could write in a week."

"I will do my best, Kurn, but you must not place any dependence on me. Tony and his partner have tried it and failed, and that leaves but a small chance for me."

Cyrus, having pulled a knife from his pocket, was busy with his buckskin shirt which he had drawn off, cutting away the inside lining to make a receptacle for the dispatches about which the Colonel was so anxious. It was close up under his arm, so that when the shirt was on and Cyrus stood at his ease, no one would have supposed that there was anything hidden away there. The opening for them being made, Cyrus folded the dispatches into a smaller compass than they were before, and having placed them therein proceeded with his needle and thread to sew up the opening again, just as it was before.

This being done, he was ready for the second dispatch, which was really a "bogus dis-

patch" and was intended solely for the Indians to read. The Colonel knew that there were some savages in that party who could read English, and he knew, too, that this bogus dispatch, if the other could be concealed, would have an alarming effect upon them. It was the idea of Cyrus, and the Colonel had reluctantly agreed to it. It was very different from the dispatch that had been concealed in the scout's hunting shirt, and said that the General's letter had been received, that the reenforcement of one thousand men would be amply sufficient to break up the Sioux camp, and that when they arrived he would be ready to assume the offensive.

"I don't suppose Red Cloud will believe that, even if it is read to him," said the Colonel. "The General's letter has been received. Pshaw! There is not a man living who can get through those lines and reach me with a dispatch from him."

"So long as they don't know that, we don't care what they believe," said Cyrus, pulling off

his moccasin and stowing the dispatch away inside of it. "If it will only throw his camp into confusion that is all we ask for. Well, Kurn, good-by. Remember, I will do my best."

"Good-by, Cyrus," replied the Colonel, extending his hand. "You have been faithful and just to me while you were here, and I shall depend upon you."

"Don't do that, Kurn; don't do that," said Cyrus, earnestly. "I will do my best, and that is all anybody can do."

Cyrus pressed the Colonel's hand for a moment, then turned toward the window and in another instant was gone. He made his way to his quarters without seeing anybody, threw himself upon his bunk, and in a little while was fast asleep. His comrades came in and aroused him when it was time to go to supper, but Cyrus did not want any. He kept his bunk until his roommates were all in bed and fast asleep, and the sentries on duty had proclaimed "Twelve o'clock and all's well!"

when he began to bestir himself. His first duty was to satisfy himself that all the scouts were in dreamland, and when this had been done he took his rifle, put on his hat, and noiselessly left his quarters. The next thing was to pass the sentries; but a man who could pass within five feet of a slumbering Sioux was not to be deterred by passing a white sentry on his post. To climb the logs and drop down on the other side was an event that was easy enough for Cyrus to accomplish, and in a few minutes the tramp of the sentries was left out of hearing.

Why was it that the Colonel was so anxious to have him leave the Fort without being seen by anybody? To tell the truth, everybody in the Fort was becoming discouraged. Three weeks had now elapsed since the erection of the palisades, and during that time the Sioux had completely surrounded them and shut them in as tight as though they had "been bottled up." A person was at liberty to go anywhere within a mile of the Fort, be-

cause certain guns which had been accurately trained covered every foot of the space; but over the hills it was as much as a man's life was worth to venture. Guy Preston was the only one, when searching for his birds, who had disobeyed that order; but it was a miracle that he had been allowed to come back. The signal tower, which stood at the distance of half a mile from the Fort, was manned every morning by four men who went out there to keep watch of the Indians; but every time that group was ready to go out, it took a Company of men to protect them. That was before Red Cloud had made his new order, that the only way to get rid of the whites was to kill all the men and burn the palisades, and this order was in force at the time Cyrus left the post. By drawing his warriors off in the daytime, Red Cloud was tempting the Colonel to send out a train for fuel, and when that was done the massacre was to begin. The Colonel was determined to get dispatches through by some means, but he did

not want to let the men know that another person had tried it and failed. It would not be long, he thought, before the men would think that it was utterly impossible to get through the Sioux lines, and so would give it up, stay there, and be massacred. He knew better than any other man did the danger that they were in, and it was no wonder that he felt downhearted.

The Fort being left out of sight and hearing, Cyrus threw himself on all fours and made his way toward Piney Creek, a little stream on the banks of which the post was located. He intended to get as far as possible below the encircling bands of Sioux before daylight, then arise to his feet and go toward his destination as fast as he could. This was a new way of leaving the lines behind him, the other scouts preferring to strike out over the prairie and try their chances in that way; but it seems that the Sioux were alive to this movement also. The stream was not large or deep enough for him to descend its current,

otherwise he would have sought a log somewhere and attempted to swim by them; but as it was he was compelled to wade sometimes in the water and at other times to flounder through bushes so thick that the darkness could almost be felt, and he did not cover more than a mile an hour. Every few feet he would stop and listen until his acute senses told him that the way was clear, and then he would struggle on again.

But Red Cloud, the head chief of the Ogallala Sioux who were making war because they were determined that the road should not pass through their country, was an old campaigner and not to be beaten by any such trick as this. He withdrew his warriors in the daytime so as to tempt the Colonel to send out a train to get fuel, but knowing that the train could not come out at night, he sent his men in closer, being equally determined that no scout should get out to carry the news of their condition to other quarters. Consequently Cyrus had not progressed more than a mile or

two when he heard a smothered exclamation in front of him, and before he could sink down where he was and get his weapon into a condition for use, he found himself in the clutches of a Sioux warrior, upon whom he had almost stepped. Of course Cyrus resisted, but it was all in vain. Another Sioux joined in the fracas, another and another came up to assist, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the scout was thrown prostrate on the ground, his weapon twisted out of his grasp, and his hands bound behind his back. It was all done quietly, and one standing at a distance of twenty feet away would not have known that there was anything going on. Why did Cyrus not take out his letter when the Sioux caught him? Because his hands were bound, and he knew that those who had him prisoner were not the ones who had any authority in the band.

In spite of what he had said to the contrary, Cyrus was not a little alarmed when he found himself powerless in the hands of the Sioux; but it was useless to resist the savages, lest

he should feel the prod of a knife in his flesh, and when they put a rope around his neck and started off with him, Cyrus went along with them as quietly as if he had formed one of the party.

It was four miles to Red Cloud's village, and Cyrus could not see anything on the way to remind him where he was. The Indians knew the course, and when they brought him into their town he was surprised at what he saw there. He had never seen so large a multitude of savages as was gathered there under Red Cloud. There were several camp fires scattered about among the lodges, none of which were wholly extinguished, and, aided by the light that they threw out, Cyrus could see nothing but tepees on all sides of him. He was conducted at once to a lodge a little apart from the others; one brave threw up a flap of it which served as a door and Cyrus was thrust in. It was all dark in there, and Cyrus hesitated about stepping around for fear that he should tread upon some of the inmates,

when one of his captors came in and seized him by the shoulder.

"Sit down," said he fiercely.

Here was one Indian who could talk English, and the hope arose in the captive's breast that perhaps he could learn something from him.

"Where shall I sit down?" said he. "Are there any persons here asleep?"

The answer was not given in words, although Cyrus wished it had been. The Indian seized him by the neck and in a moment more he was laid out prostrate on the ground.

"Sit down where you are," said the savage, more fiercely than before.

Cyrus did not say anything more just then, but straightened up as soon as he could and looked around to see what the Indian was going to do. By the aid of a camp fire whose light streamed in through the flap of the door that was now open, he could observe the movements of his enemy quite distinctly. He saw him pull his blankets about his shoulders and

take a seat beside the door with his rifle across his knees. Cyrus drew a short breath of relief for he had nothing more to fear from him until daylight. That tepee was to be his prison, and the savage was to be his watcher as long as the darkness continued.

CHAPTER IX.

The Medicine Works Wonders

Cyrus was a captive now. There was no mistake about that. The only thing he could do was to lie down and wait as patiently as he could until daylight came. The rope with which he was bound was very painful to him, but Cyrus knew it would be worse than useless to ask his sentry to loosen it. The savages knew too much for that. They had had some bitter experience with the trappers of the mountains in granting them the free use of their hands, and they did not mean to be caught that way any more.

It must have been about two o'clock when Cyrus was captured, and he thought he had never known the time to pass so slowly as did the hours that intervened before the first gray streaks of dawn were seen in the east;

for they told him that something was to be done with him very speedily. During those hours he was often compelled to change his position on account of his bonds, but the savage never once changed his. If he had been a marble man he could not have sat more motionless; but all the time his eyes were fastened upon his captive as if he meant that not a sign from him should escape his notice. Finally the flap of the door was drawn further aside, and an Indian's face appeared. He wanted to see whom they had captured, but he said not a word to Cyrus or his watcher. Presently other faces appeared, until Cyrus thought that the whole camp of the Sioux was astir.

Daylight came on apace, and then Cyrus began to take some note of the things in the lodge in which he was confined, and found to his surprise that he was in no danger of stepping on slumbering inmates. With the exception of himself and the sentinel who was keeping watch over him, the tepee was as

empty as it was when it was put up. It was probably intended as a sort of prison for anybody who might be captured by the Sioux, but up to this time Cyrus had the satisfaction of knowing that he was the only one who had seen the inside of it.

"And if I could have my way I am the last one who will see how it looks," said Cyrus to himself. "No doubt they expected to capture a good many more. Somehow I don't feel as safe by having Guy Preston's letter about me as I did by having that scrap of sage brush that the Indian gave me. Well, if it doesn't effect my release it surely would not effect Guy's, if he were here in my place."

It must have been nine o'clock before anyone came near him again, and all the while he was in agony through his bonds which seemed to hurt him more the longer he was tied up with them. But they could not make him forget his stomach, which was clamoring loudly for something nourishing. He had not eaten anything since dinner the day before,

and even a hard-tack he thought would prove very acceptable. While he was thinking about it, two Indians came to the door of the tepee, and they came in a hurry as though they were after something. They exchanged a few words with his sentry—they were spoken so low that Cyrus did not fully comprehend them—and then one of them seized Cyrus by the collar and dragged him to his feet. The first thing he did was to untie the prisoner's bonds; and when Cyrus felt his arms at liberty he stretched them out with an exclamation which testified to the delight he felt.

"If I just had you two here alone, how quick I would end you up," said he, to himself. "I will bet you could not catch me in a fair race. They are going to take my clothes also," he added, when one of the Indians proceeded to take off his hunting shirt. "Does that mean that I am to get ready for the stake?"

It certainly looked that way, but Cyrus never uttered a word out loud. He submitted to the

disrobing as quietly as he could, and even assisted them when something about his clothes bothered them; and in two minutes more he was stripped clean. But he noticed two things, filled as he was with other matters, and standing in fear of the torture which seemed to be not far distant: the savages, when they came into possession of his various articles of wardrobe, were careful to look into all the pockets. Not one escaped their vigilance. His pipe, his knife, and tobacco, and various other trinkets, which men have about them, were quickly taken by his captors, until finally a grunt from one of them announced the finding of Winged Arrow's letter,—the one he had received from his father. The grunt speedily brought his sentry to his feet, and he leaned over the shoulders of the others and stared hard at the drawings. Not a word was said to Cyrus as to how he came by the papers, but they exchanged several incoherent expressions, which no doubt were perfectly understood among themselves, but which were

Greek to the captive. At last they seemed to have come to an agreement regarding something, for one of them started off at a keen run, while the other went on examining his clothes. When he pulled off one of the moccasins the bogus dispatch dropped out.

"Now you have something that will do your heart good," muttered Cyrus. "Why don't you run off with that? They have left my clothes here on the ground —"

But Cyrus was a little too hasty in coming to this conclusion. The finding of the bogus dispatch, of course, created another series of grunts, which ended a good deal as the first one did. The other captor seized the paper and disappeared with it, but before he went he gathered up the clothes and carried them away also. That was too much for Cyrus, and he sat down on the ground and thought about it, while the sentry returned to his seat by the door.

Half an hour passed, during which Cyrus's mind was in a state of confusion. This treat-

ment was very different from any he had received while a prisoner in the hands of the Indians, and he had been one four times when nothing but the stake seemed to be waiting for him. Twice was he rescued by soldiers; a third time he was saved by an old squaw who somehow got it into her head that Cyrus resembled her son who had been killed by the whites; and the fourth time that bunch of sage brush brought about his release. Now it was that letter of Winged Arrow; and he confessed that his chances were slim indeed. It is true that he was very young in years to be the hero of all these adventures, but those among the mountain men with whom he was best acquainted declared that he had been in skirmishes enough to fill out three or four books. Like the Medicine Man among the different tribes, who runs all sorts of risks to make his followers believe that he has found the proper "thing" at last which will turn all the white man's bullets away from him, Cyrus took every risk in time of war that anybody

could take and live. He was foremost in all the Indian fights and was one of Colonel Carrington's favorite scouts. When everyone else failed he called upon Cyrus, and Cyrus had never been found wanting. All men who live among the Indians soon fall into their ways, and every one of them believed that Cyrus had discovered some "medicine" that brought him safely out of any danger he might get into.

At the end of half an hour, another faint step was heard outside the tepee, the flap was thrown further open and this time Winged Arrow appeared. Cyrus recognized him on the instant from the description that Guy Preston had given him, and the first thought that passed through his mind was that he had never seen a finer-looking Indian. His face wore a scowl which did not in any way add to his appearance, and he did not pay any attention to his keeper at all. In his hands he carried all of Cyrus's clothing which he threw toward the prisoner with the muttered exclamation:—

"I suppose these things belong to you. Put them on."

Cyrus was fully as surprised as Guy Preston to hear himself addressed in perfect English by an Indian in his war clothing, but he lost no time in obeying instructions. When he came to his hunting shirt he carelessly grasped it under the right arm, and a thrill shot through him when he felt the dispatch there as he had left it. The bogus dispatch, the one that was intended for the Indians to read, was gone.

"Now you look more like yourself," said Winged Arrow, as he turned about and beckoned to some one behind him, "I guess something to eat would not do you any harm, would it?"

An Indian girl came into the tepee and laid Cyrus's breakfast before him on the ground, and quickly went out again. Winged Arrow calmly seated himself on the ground. Cyrus did the same, and while he was busy with the viands which Winged Arrow had provid-

for him, he kept one eye fixed upon the young Indian as if he hoped to see something in his face which would give him a faint glimpse of what the future had in store for him; but Winged Arrow's features were as unmoved as if he had no secret to communicate. The provisions did not trouble him much, for it was not as hearty a breakfast as some he had eaten at the Fort, although the grub there was getting scarce since the Sioux had shut them in from all the world—a joint of beef which had once been warmed, but was now cold, a chunk of Indian bread which had doubtless been cut out of some "parfleche" repository and a cup of cold water formed the substance of his breakfast. But it was better than nothing, and finally it had all disappeared except the bones.

"Now I am ready for anything you have to propose," said Cyrus. "What do you fellows intend to do with me?"

"You belong to me and so I am going to set you free," said Winged Arrow, as if he

were talking of something that did not interest Cyrus in the least. "It was the worst thing I ever heard of, getting you free, for our people have all something against you."

"I don't see how they make that out," replied Cyrus, feeling in his pockets for his pipe. "You can't point to a single thing that ever I did that injured you in the least. I have let more than one chance go by that I have had of sending your people to the Happy Hunting Grounds, and have let them get off scot-free when I might have had a scalp to take with me as well as not."

"But something is always happening to take you away from us," said Winged Arrow, "and what do you suppose it was that saved your life this time?"

"Was it that letter that you gave to Guy Preston?"

The young savage took the letter out of his bosom and gave it to Cyrus, who took it and stowed it away in one of his pockets.

"Now that letter can answer one more pur-

pose," said Winged Arrow. "Any man who is captured after that will lose his life."

"How do you make that out?"

"I promised my father," began Winged Arrow.

"By the way, who is your father?" said Cyrus. "He must be a man of considerable standing in the tribe or else you would not be permitted to meet a man between the lines, or to hold a chat with me now."

"He is a Medicine Man," replied the young Indian. "If there is a fight here you will see him in the foremost ranks. He has a medicine which he believes will render him impervious to the white man's bullets. You do not believe in such things, do you?"

"Yes, I do," said Cyrus, earnestly. "One of your people gave me such medicine, which afterward saved my life."

"What was it?" asked Winged Arrow, becoming interested.

"A handful of sage brush wrapped up in a piece of buckskin. I don't see why you fel-

lows can't have some medicine of that kind as well as some others. What did you promise your father?"

"That I would join him and help fight for the lands which the whites are trying to cheat us out of, provided he would give me the choice of saving two white men who might chance to fall into our hands. I had an eye on that black horse which that Lieutenant rides — What did you say his name was?"

"Guy Preston; and he is just the best white fellow that ever lived."

"I am not saying anything about that. I had an eye on him ever since you left Fort Robinson, and yesterday I chanced to meet him outside the lines. I told him that the letter would save his life, but now he has gone and given it up to you. I kept my promise, although I had a hard time of it. If that letter comes into our camp on another man, it will save his life too; but that is all."

"Don't you think you are in big business to help the Indians to clean out the whites?"

said Cyrus, who did not know what else to say.

"You must have seen Guy Preston down there at the Fort, and he told you all I had to say on that point," replied Winged Arrow with a scowl. "Of course I shall help the Indians clean out the whites. This is our country; no one else has any claim upon it, and we are bound to wipe them out or die with weapons in our hands. Say," said the Indian, almost in a whisper, "I read your bogus dispatch, but the other is safe where it belongs."

"What other?" asked Cyrus, startled in spite of himself.

"The one you have got in your hunting shirt. I put my hand on it, but did not dare take it out. If I had, and had read it to Red Cloud, that letter would not have saved you."

"What did that bogus dispatch do?" inquired Cyrus, drawing a long breath of relief. The savages had had the genuine dispatch in their hands and it had been saved to him

through Winged Arrow, who had so much at stake. He had never heard anything like it before, and his admiration for the young Indian was almost unbounded. He believed now more firmly than he had before that there were some traits in the savage character with which the white men were entirely unacquainted.

"It did not do much," replied Winged Arrow. "Red Cloud sent off a band of scouts to see if the dispatch told the truth, but he did not believe that any living man could have gotten through our cloud of warriors with news to the Fort. I repeat that I did not dare take out that other dispatch, for that told the truth; and you would have been tied out to the stake now."

"Well, I am glad it is no worse," said Cyrus. "You may fall into the hands of some of our people some day——"

"Well, when I do it will be when I am dead," returned Winged Arrow emphatically. "You can't help me then. But here come

the braves to take you back to the Fort. Give Guy my kindest regards and tell him to keep that letter about his own person. It will save one more and that is all."

A party of warriors rode up at this moment, one of them carrying Cyrus's Winchester which he gave into his hands. He stopped for a moment to shake hands with Winged Arrow, but the latter stood with his hands behind him, which Cyrus took as a sign that no hand shaking was to be allowed; so he touched his hat to the young savage, and, following the motions of one of the Indians, started off toward the Fort. Not a thing was said to him during their long walk until they arrived at the top of the swell, from which they could see the palisades. One glance was enough to show him that the vigilant soldiers were on the watch. He saw a commotion in the Fort, occasioned by the men hurrying to their quarters, which was a gentle hint to the savages that they had come close enough.

"There are your friends," said one who had evidently talked English to him the night before, "Go home."

Cyrus renewed his efforts at hand shaking, but the Indians turned their horses and retreated behind the hill.

CHAPTER X.

Guy Is Astonished

"Yes, sir," said the officer who had the glass, taking one look at the Sioux who speedily retreated out of sight behind the swell, and a longer look at the liberated captive who came toward the Fort at rapid strides, swinging his cap around his head as he came; "that is Cyrus, if I ever saw him. He fell into the hands of the savages, and for some reason best known to themselves they have turned him loose."

If it were certain that it is possible for a boy to become amazed and delighted at the same instant, Guy Preston experienced both those emotions. While Guy was wondering how this state of affairs could be brought about, the officer of the guard suddenly appeared upon the platform and was saluted by the officer in command of the gun.

"The Colonel says you have a better view of that man, whoever he is, than he has, and he begs to know what you make of him," said Captain Kendall. "Is it Cyrus?"

"Yes, sir, it is Cyrus," replied the Second Lieutenant. "Take the glass and look for yourself."

Captain Kendall's observation was not a long one. He leveled the glass for a minute, and then handed it back.

"Guy," said he, forgetting that he was an officer and speaking to his subordinate, "your letter has worked wonders."

"Do you really think my letter had anything to do with that?" inquired Guy, so excited that he could hardly stand still.

"Know it? Of course it did. It was the only thing he had in his possession that kept him clear of being staked out."

The officer of the guard went back to the Colonel who had sent him to make inquiries, and Guy leaned upon the palisades and watched Cyrus as he came toward the Fort. As soon

as he found out that he had attracted the attention of the soldiers, Cyrus put on his cap, took one look behind him to see what had become of the Sioux, and broke into a run. He had strange things to communicate and he was in haste to unbosom himself. The officer of the day admitted him at the gate, shook hands with him, and then, in obedience to some request that Cyrus made of him, conducted him to the Colonel. A few moments afterward the order came for the soldiers to march down to the parade ground and break ranks, and this left Guy at liberty to finish his nap from which he had been so violently aroused; but Guy had no intention of doing anything of the kind. When he broke ranks he hurried away to hunt his roommates, and found that they were on the same mission as he was.

"I say," whispered Perkins, "I believe your letter had something to do with Cyrus being among us safe and sound."

"So do I," said Guy. "Now how was it

brought about? Has anybody seen Cyrus to speak to him since he came back?"

Nobody had, and we will take the liberty of going with him when he was led to where the Colonel stood. To say that Colonel Carrington was delighted to see him once more would be putting it very mildly. The commanding officer had almost as much affection for him as he would have had if Cyrus had been a younger brother, and it showed itself in the heartiness with which he grasped the scout's hand.

"Well, Cyrus, you ran plump into their hands, did you not?" said he.

"Just as fair as a man could," returned Cyrus. "If they had been waiting for me down by the creek in the bushes, they could not have bounced me quicker. It is impossible for a man to get through those lines without being caught." Then in a lower tone he added: "I have got your dispatch all right."

"Did they read the bogus one?" asked the Colonel.

"They did, but it did not disturb Red Cloud any. You said in that dispatch, 'Your letter of a certain date has been received.' That gave you away, for the savages knew that no man could go through their lines with news for you from the other side of the world. They simply sent out scouts to see if your expedition was coming, and that was all they did do."

"Do you think they are going to attack us to-day?"

"No, sir. They are going to wait for that train that is to bring you fuel, and then you are going to catch it."

"And that will come to-morrow," said the Colonel, walking up and down. "Our wood is nearly out and we must have some. Captain Brown, break ranks and let the men go to their quarters. Cyrus, come with me."

The Colonel went off toward his room followed by his scout, and when they were once inside of it, the commanding officer threw off his hat and paced back and forth as if he did not know what to do with himself, while

Cyrus took a seat on the nearest cracker box, pulled out his knife, and proceeded to bring the real dispatch to light,—for be it known that the frontiersmen who were employed by the government as scouts did not hold themselves subject to military law the same as soldiers did. A captain or even the Major would have thought twice before taking off his coat in the Colonel's quarters without being asked, but Cyrus did not wait for any invitation.

"There is your dispatch, Kurn," said Cyrus, as he brought out the document. "And I will tell you what is a fact: The time for you to send it will be after the massacre occurs."

"But my goodness! I cannot think of that thing without shuddering," exclaimed the Colonel. "Must I send men, who have been with me so long through thick and thin, out to be massacred by those thievish Sioux? I won't do it, and that's all there is about it."

"Then we will starve and freeze to death for the want of a little pluck on your part," said Cyrus. "We've got to have wood."

"How did that Winged Arrow manage to get you off on this letter?" said the Colonel, who wanted time to think the matter over.

"I don't know. He was probably around when my clothes were examined, and Red Cloud told him that he could do as he pleased. That letter will save just one more person; and after that it is of no account."

After a little time the Colonel cooled down so that Cyrus could begin and tell him his story from beginning to end. He never once interrupted him until he got through, and then he dismissed Cyrus with the remark that he would send for him after a while. There were a good many points to think over and he wanted a little time to himself. But there was one thing about it, he said: If anybody was going out there to fall a victim to those Sioux, he would be one of the party.

"Of course we shall all be sorry for that," said Cyrus. "The massacre has not taken place yet. They may make the attack in such a way that they will be nicely whipped."

When Cyrus went out on the parade ground, he was besieged by officers who had been awaiting his appearance and who wanted to know all about the matter. Of course Guy Preston and his chums were there, but they were obliged to keep in the background until their superior officers had heard all there was to tell. When Cyrus had finished with them he started toward his quarters and the boys followed him; but all they learned in addition to what he had already told was in regard to what he thought of Winged Arrow.

"It is just as Guy said yesterday," said he, kicking off his moccasins and throwing himself down upon his bunk, "Winged Arrow has no business to be a Sioux. He knows too much to be associated with that race of people; but the more he learns about the way those folks of his are being swindled by the government, the more he determines to stick to them."

"Did you see Red Cloud while you were a prisoner among them?" asked Perkins.

"I did not see anybody," replied Cyrus. "They kept themselves to themselves, and all they had to do was to bring me out and release me. I tell you, boys, we are going to see some fun right here, and the Colonel says it will begin to-morrow."

"The massacre?" asked all the boys at once.

"Yes, sir. We must have some wood, and about the time that the train and its escort get ready to march out, you will hear the war whoop."

"Well, let it come," said Perkins. "They will find that American soldiers are not the men to run just because they hear a whoop. We enlisted to fight, and now we are going to see what sort of a beginning we can make at it."

The other boys did not say anything, but the expression on their faces said that they were ready for anything the Sioux had to spring upon them. Cyrus's move toward his bunk was a hint that he had not got all the

sleep he should have had, and after asking a few more unimportant questions, they left the quarters, Guy going toward his room to finish his nap and the others to attend to various duties about the Fort. But slumber was a thing that Guy could not court just then. He was too busily thinking. He heard everything that passed outside his room, and when the Orderly softly entered and told him that "supper was on," he got up without having closed his eyes.

The watch from six o'clock until midnight was a long and tedious one to Guy, though he, of course, had the officer of the day to talk to. Guy was thinking of what Winged Arrow told him—that if he ever saw one Indian battlefield he never would want to see another—and every chance he got he asked Mr. Kendall about it.

"You could not have been in the war of the Rebellion, for that happened when you were a child," said Mr. Kendall; "but I saw seven of them, and I tell you they were all I

wanted to see. The men were not mutilated, of course, but there was no need of that. I don't want to talk about it."

"But did they never make an attack on our folks on a dark night like this, sir?" asked Guy.

"Oh, yes; the darker the better. But you need not fear an Indian's coming near us on a night like this. It is so dark that I can not even see a star; and if you were in their camp now you would find them all in their tepees fast asleep. When the moon rises or the day is just breaking, you will want to keep a bright lookout for them. That is the time they make the assault."

"Why is that, sir? When it is dark you can't see how many of them there are."

"I know that; but every one you kill will go to the Happy Hunting Grounds in a way that he won't like. He goes there in just the condition that he leaves this life. If it is dark, he will have to grope around through all Eternity in darkness, no hunting for him and

no scalping forays to show how much of a man he was in the days gone by. But if he is killed in broad daylight in the full possession of all his faculties, he will be just that way in the Happy Hunting Grounds. He will be full of strength and vigor, and that is the kind of life he can live forever. He never grows old. Go out that way and see what is the matter with those horses. They act as though they were alarmed about something."

"The Indian carries his religion with him even to death," said Guy to himself, as he went out to the horses with his heart in his mouth to find out what had disturbed them. "And I suppose that every man he scalps is there to be his slave. I would look pretty being the slave of a sneaking Sioux warrior, would I not?"

Although Guy did not like the idea of being so far from camp to find out what was the matter with the horses, he did his duty faithfully, and by questioning some of the sentries who were there to watch them, found out that

there was nothing the trouble, only some of the horses were uneasy, and by continually lying down and getting up had communicated their restlessness to others. With this report he returned to Captain Kendall, who was perfectly satisfied with it.

The hours flew away and at last his relief came on; and Guy, feeling the need of sleep, went to his room and tumbled into his bunk without removing his clothes. He went to breakfast, and when he entered the room he saw in an instant that something had happened to throw a gloom over the officers, some of whom were pale and all devoted themselves to the beans and hard-tack without paying attention to anybody else. There was not any of that joking and laughing, not any of the "sells" which some of the young officers were so prone to give out during the meal hour, but each one seemed to be occupied with his own thoughts. There was something about them that affected Guy more than he liked, and he too became somewhat gloomy.

"What's up?" said he in a whisper, nudging Perkins, as he took a seat beside him. "Anybody killed?"

"No, but there will be some that way before the day is over," said Perkins, in the same cautious whisper. There were ranking captains there at the table and the youngsters had to be careful what they said in their hearing. "Where's your letter?"

"By George! Do you have to go out?" said Guy, in dismay.

"There is a train about to go out for fuel and our Company is ordered to be in readiness to aid them if they get into trouble," said Perkins. "Forty men are to go with the train, and if they get more than they can attend to, we have to go out."

"I may want that letter myself," answered Guy, drawing a long breath when he thought of the number of Sioux that could be brought against them. "Cyrus has it, and I did not think to ask him for it yesterday."

"Oh, you are all right. You won't have to go."

"Why, how is that? Did you not say the whole Company—"

"Yes, but that does not include you. You are to command the signal tower and keep watch of us."

Guy's first impulse was to settle back in his chair and give vent to his satisfaction by drawing another long breath of relief; and his next was a fit of anger that he should be selected to command the signal tower out of reach of danger, while his whole Company, Perkins included, should be ordered to hold themselves ready to march to their aid if the Sioux proved too strong for them.

"It is the meanest thing I ever heard of," exclaimed Guy, speaking in his ordinary tone of voice before he thought, "I will see the Colonel and have him put somebody else in the signal tower."

"No, I guess I would not bother the Colonel if I were in your place," said Captain Kendall, with a smile. "The Colonel does not want to be troubled by anybody. You will get the

sharp edge of the old man's tongue, if you speak to him."

"But just see here, Captain," began Guy.

"I heard all about it when you were asleep," continued the Captain. "You can thank your lucky stars that you are not going out there to be killed by the Sioux Indians."

The tone in which the Captain uttered these words made it clear to the young officer's comprehension that he did not want any more such talk around that table, and none of the other officers liked it either. The Colonel was supreme there, and an order once issued by him was to be taken as final. He devoted himself to his food, but he kept up a terrific thinking all the while. Of course, there was an even chance that the Sioux would be whipped if they made their attack upon the soldiers, and that was another thing that worried Guy. If they were whipped he wanted a hand in it; but he could not assist them any, if he were confined in that tower to pass signals.

"Do you think you can get that letter?"

asked Perkins, when he had given the officers a little time to forget Guy's interruption. "If it is to save one more prisoner, it may stand me well in hand."

"I will try it as soon as I get through breakfast," said Guy. "I don't know why he should want to keep it now. I wish Captain Kendall had not said what he had. I would have had the Colonel change that order sure."

"Well, you had better take his advice and thank your lucky stars that you are well out of the scrape."

"Will you change places with me?" asked Guy, a bright idea striking him, "you go to that signal tower —"

"Not by a great sight, I won't," said Perkins hastily. "If the other boys are going to fight, I am going to fight too. You will see me coming back covered with glory and three or four scalps in my hand."

Guy did not want much breakfast. He got through with what he had on his plate, asked to be excused, and left the table.

CHAPTER XI

In the Signal Tower

"Yes, I heard all about it while you were asleep, as Captain Kendall told you. The men have not yet been informed of the part they have to perform, but I know that they are all ready."

Thus spoke Cyrus the scout when Guy Preston came rushing into his quarters to tell him what Colonel Carrington was going to do with the troops under his command. As he uttered the words, he leaned his cracker box against the jamb of a window and looked at Guy as if to ask him what he thought about it.

"If he is my Colonel I say that he was guilty of doing a mean thing," said Guy, spitefully. "There I was fast asleep, and he never told me a thing about it."

"Of course he didn't. A Colonel, whose

right it is to command a thousand men, does not generally look to a Second Lieutenant for advice. We must have wood, and that is the only way to get it."

"I don't expect him to look to me for advice; but when he is going to send my whole regiment away from me, it is high time he was telling me of it."

Cyrus laughed, but made no reply.

"He knew all the time that I wanted a hand in the first fight the regiment got into, because he has often heard me say so; and then to go and send them off into the presence of the Sioux—I think he should have said something to me about it."

"You do your duty faithfully as Second Lieutenant, and when the time comes for you to get in a fight, you'll go. The Colonel will not keep you back. You will be safe up there in the signal tower—"

"And suppose the Sioux get whipped?"

"It is your regiment and you will share in the glory; but if the Sioux are too many for

them, and the last one of them gets wiped out, why you will be safe."

"I see that I can't get any sympathy from you," said Guy in a doleful tone; whereat Cyrus laughed louder than ever. "I thought when I came here and told you of it, you would feel for me; but you are as bad as the rest. What have you done with that letter I gave you?"

"Do you mean Winged Arrow's letter? The Colonel's got it."

"Honor bright?" said Guy, who wondered if Cyrus were not fooling him. "He does not want that letter now."

"He has got it anyway. Look here, Guy, I will tell you something else, if you will not speak about it. I am going to try it again."

"Are you going out in the face of the Sioux after the narrow escape you had?" exclaimed Guy, almost paralyzed by the information. "That letter is going to save one more prisoner, but it may not save you a second time."

"I am going to try it; or, rather, I am going

to see if I can't get through their numbers without being caught. Such things have been done, and I don't see why they cannot be done again."

"But what are you going to do this time? If the Sioux were on the watch before, they will be doubly so now."

"Not much after that fight comes off. That will throw the Sioux crazy, and that will be the time to try it, if at all."

"No matter whether we whip them or not?"

"That won't make any difference. If they fail, they will have their mourning to go through with, and by the time they get through with that I shall have passed through and be well on my way to Fort Robinson."

"Well, Cyrus, I bade you good-by once before when I never thought to see you again, but I guess you are gone now," said Guy, advancing and extending his hand, "and you had better bid me good-by too."

"Oh, you will be safe in that signal tower," said Cyrus, who did not see the use of so much

feeling on Guy's part. "If the Sioux wanted to capture that tower, they could have taken it long ago. Good-by, but remember that I will see you again."

"Then Perkins cannot have the letter if you want it," said Guy.

"I think he had better not. The Colonel thinks I ought to have it, and he will give it to me before I start."

Guy went to his room and there he found his roommates sitting around doing nothing. They had their weapons close at hand, but made no move to put them on until they got orders.

"Well, boys, there will not be so many of us here to-night," said Guy, breaking in upon the silence. "Some of us will leave this room for the last time."

"You will be all right and tight," said Arthur, "and if we whip the Sioux you will wish you had been along."

"Do any of you want to change places with me?" asked Guy, for he was not at all pleased

with the arrangement. "I will ask the Colonel ——"

"You need not ask him anything on my account," said Arthur quickly. "I would not go up in that signal tower for all the money there is in the world. Our boys are going to fight, and I am going to fight too. There. That lets you out. Good-by."

"The Colonel desires to see you, sir," said an Orderly, stepping up and saluting.

Guy jumped up, put on his weapons, and turned to take leave of his roommates, all of whom came forward to shake him by the hand, but he did not see a sign of wavering on the part of any of them. Their faces were white, but there was a determined look about their features which showed that they fully comprehended the danger of their situation and were ready to take the consequences.

"Good morning, Mr. Preston," said the Colonel, when he entered the quarters and found him alone there with Colonel Fetterman. "I

have put you in command of the signal tower to-day."

"So I have understood, sir," said Guy. "But don't you think ——"

"I have thought the matter all over and I have resolved upon my course," replied the commanding officer, turning almost fiercely upon Guy. "I want to see if you understand the signals."

"Yes, sir; I know them by heart," returned Guy, who saw that it would be of no use to ask the Colonel to change that order.

"Very well. You are to keep a close watch on the party that goes out to protect the wagons, and you will be careful to make the same signals to them that I shall make to you."

"Very good, sir. I understand."

"Then my business with you is done. I see that the squad is getting ready," said the Colonel, as the blast of a bugle echoed through the Fort. "You will find three men out there, with rations, and you will stand watch while you are there. That's all."

Guy made all haste to get out of the room, for he did not want to be within reach of the Colonel's frown any longer than he could help, and furthermore he was anxious to see what preparations had been made for the party that was to go after the wood. The whole Fort was in commotion, but everything was done in regular order. Those of the soldiers who had nothing to do were standing in little groups and watching their comrades whom they never expected to see again; forty men were filing through the gate, mounted on their horses and forming on the parade ground under command of Captain Kendall; three men, who were evidently waiting for somebody, were there on foot with their haversacks slung over their shoulders; and the yells outside the stockade announced that the teamsters were busily hitching up their mules. Guy saw all this at a glance, and then bent his steps toward the three men who were standing there waiting for orders.

"Here's your party, Mr. Preston," said the

Adjutant. "You will go out and relieve the men in the signal tower. I suppose the Colonel gave you orders before you left?"

"Yes, sir, what little he had to give," answered Guy. "I have never been in the tower before, but I think I know what is required of me."

The Adjutant bowed and went away, and Guy, whose men were standing at parade rest, had nothing to do but to wait until the escort was ready to march. It was quickly done, and when he saw the Captain mount his horse and turn to salute the Colonel, Guy ordered his men through the gate to catch one of the wagons on which he intended to get a ride out to the signal tower. When the Captain went by with his Company, he returned Guy's salute and responded, "Thank you," to his expressions of good luck and a safe return to the Fort with the wagon train.

"I am afraid, sir, that it won't be such good luck with him after all," said one of his men as the Captain rode on. "It does

not seem as though there were any Sioux around here, does it, sir?"

"No," replied Guy. "If that Red Cloud were only out of the way, what a fine country this would be to live in. Such splendid hunting as there is to be had here I never saw before. You can see prairie chickens every day from the Fort."

There was no danger to be feared until they got to the signal tower, but none of the men seemed to enjoy the trip, because they knew that the Sioux were watching them from every hilltop within range of their vision. The Captain again saluted when they reached the tower, and Guy and his men jumped off the wagon to be admitted by the Second Lieutenant who was in command there.

"Halloo, Guy," said he, and he was glad to see that his relief had come. "Now you can have the fun of sitting here for twenty-four hours, with nothing but the swells to look at. Say," he added in a lower tone, "Who was that officer who went out hunting day before yesterday?

I see he had a Sioux to show him the way back. If I didn't see you here safe and sound I should think it was you. His horse resembled yours."

"Well, sir, it was I, and no mistake," said Guy. "That Sioux came to warn me to keep out of the way of an approaching massacre which I think is going to happen now in less than two hours."

"Aw! Get out," exclaimed the Second Lieutenant, throwing back his head and laughing immoderately. "That Sioux was a friend of yours, was he not?"

"I have not time to explain matters to you now, for you had better go inside the Fort as soon as you can. He gave me a letter—"

"Aw! Get out," said the Lieutenant again. "You have been listening to some of Cyrus's stories, and he has made you believe that you have some sort of medicine that will protect you from their bullets. Come on, all my men, and we will go to the Fort while you are thinking about it. It may be that we

will find some Sioux who will give us a letter—"

Guy and his men were all inside the tower by this time, and they closed the heavy door and bolted it, thus shutting off what else the officer was going to say in regard to that letter. They heard his laugh ringing on the outside, and through the loopholes saw him march away toward the Fort.

"Did that Sioux really give you a letter, sir?" asked one of his men, as they climbed the rude stairway to reach the top. "Who was that letter directed to?"

"I have not time to go into all the particulars now," said Guy, as he leaned on the walls on the top of the tower and looked after the wagon train and its escort. "You will hear all about it when you get back to the Fort. Is that flag all ready? Lay aside your guns, but have them handy, and keep a close watch on that train."

As Guy had never been in the tower before, he looked around him with no little curiosity.

The ridge leading from the Fort to where good timber was to be found was in plain sight, and every move the wagon train made could be distinctly seen. The Fort stood considerably lower than this tower, but there were several mountain howitzers in the Fort which had been trained on this ridge. The gunners, however, could not shell the ravines on each side of it with any accuracy, and Guy saw at once, with a soldier's eye, that about a mile beyond them was a splendid place for an ambush. His heart fell when he noticed it, but he did not say anything to his men about it.

"The Sioux have got the better of us or I shall miss my guess," said Guy, hauling his binoculars from its case and settling himself on a log which had been cut off sufficient to serve for a seat. "If they make their attack from one of those ravines, we cannot see it until we are right on to it, and they will clean us out as sure as shooting."

Having observed the train and seen that it was all right so far, Guy began an examina-

tion of the tower to see what chances he had for making a successful resistance in case he were assaulted. He was more than satisfied with it. The tower was built of green logs which could not be set on fire by the hostiles at any reasonable distance, and was well supplied with loopholes, so that a company of determined men could hold their own until assistance could reach them from the Fort. While he was thus engaged one of his men called his attention to a faint sound which he heard coming from the further end of the ridge.

"It sounded to me like a war whoop, sir," said he. "It could not be that. Yes, sir, that is what it is."

In an instant Guy Preston was on his feet with his glass pointed toward the wagon train, and saw something that he hoped he never would see again—a hundred Indians, all well mounted and armed, were making a charge on the wagon train's escort. Where they came from was a mystery, but they were there, and the faint yells which struck his ears now and

then showed that they were out there for no good purpose.

"Where's that flag," he exclaimed, "give it to me, quick!"

In less time than it takes to tell it, Guy had grasped the emblem and was waving to the watching sentries on the palisades what was going on a mile from them, but which was shut out from their view by the ridge:—

"About one hundred Indians going to attack the train."

Then he threw the flag down and waited with all the fortitude he could command for some response to the signal. A moment afterward it came. One of the mountain howitzers belched forth its contents, the shell whizzed by so close to them that it seemed as if they could touch it, and exploded in the air right in line for the Sioux, but a good way above them. Another and another followed, but their firing was entirely too wild to do any damage. Guy was on nettles.

"They will never hit the Indians at that

rate," he exclaimed. "Why don't they shoot lower?"

All the shells which came from the howitzers followed the same course, and then Guy, forgetting that he was an inferior and in no condition to offer advice, seized the flag again and signaled once more to the Fort.

"You are firing entirely too high. Shoot closer to the ground."

Whatever the commanding officer thought of his advice Guy never knew, but he thought it a good plan to follow these instructions. The next shell came lower and the next one lower yet, and then Guy raised the flag once more.

"That is all right. You stand a chance of hitting them now."

"Oh, don't I wish that I was down there with my Winchester!" said Guy, so excited that he could scarcely stand still. "By the way, do any of you see Winged Arrow?"

"Don't know him, sir," said all the men at once.

"That is so; you did not see him, did you? This fellow wears a buckskin shirt and rides a small sorrel horse ——"

"Every fellow down there is stripped to the waist," said one.

"And they all ride small sorrel horses," said another.

"Well, I guess he is there," said Guy under his breath. "I hope he will come off scot-free. But he said that the Sioux could raise three thousand men. This doesn't look like it."

"There is something going on in the Fort, sir," said one of the men after a little pause. "It looks to me as if they were going to send out re-enforcements."

These words brought Guy back to earth again. If the Colonel was about to send men to help the escort, he must send his own Company. The young officer went off into a state of excitement again.

CHAPTER XII.

What Guy Saw

Guy Preston turned with his glass to his eyes again. There was something going on in the Fort — it was so far away that he could not hear the words of command, but he knew that horses were going in and that the men were running about as if they were getting ready for something. Presently the column appeared — a hundred men, who seemed to be intent on going to the rescue, for they had hardly time to clear the gate before they broke into a trot and then into a gallop. A little nearer and Guy recognized the faces of his old Company, Perkins, Arthur Brigham, all his roommates, as well as several of the rank and file. Colonel Fetterman was in command, and though Guy thought he looked rather white, he heard the order "gallop"

which rang in his ears the same as of old. Did they know that they were going to their death? If they did there was not one of the hundred men who seemed to realize it.

"Oh, Oh!" shouted Guy, prancing about in his excitement until he came near missing his steps and going back through the trap-door with more haste than he had come up a few minutes before. "All my Company are there, every one of them, and I am to stay here cooped up like a rat in a trap! Why did not the Colonel remember this? They will come back flushed with victory and I will have had no hand in it!"

"Do you see any men in company D there, sir?" asked the Sergeant, who stood close at Guy's elbow.

"Look for yourself," replied the young officer, handing his glass over to the man. "I don't know all the men in Company D."

The Sergeant took the glass, and one look was enough to satisfy him. He gave it back without saying a word.

"I guess you are in the same boat with me," said Guy, once more leveling the glass to take a nearer view of the approaching reenforcements. "They will get all the glory of this fight. I see Captain Brown and three or four 'old timers' who are going out with them, and we are bound to whip; but it seems hard to me to stay here and do nothing!"

As the horsemen tore by, Guy Preston raised his cap and swung it lustily around his head, and there were a dozen men, among whom were Perkins and Arthur, who returned the salute. A moment afterward the support was gone, and Guy, with a long breath which seemed to say that there was no help for it, settled down to watch them and keep a close view of their movements. Nor were they obliged to wait long. The Indians seemed surprised at the approach of so large a reenforcement to support the train, and at once became confused and started to retreat; and that was enough for the supporting column. Guy saw Colonel Fetterman turn in his saddle

and swing his sword above his head, and in an instant more a yell came to his ears and his men turned down the ridge.

"Bully for our side of the house!" yelled Guy Preston, once more swinging his cap around his head. "It shows what you can do, Mr. Sioux, when you get some men to oppose you."

"They are retreating, sir?" asked the Sergeant.

"Of course they are. They cannot stand against anything like their own number."

While Guy stood with the flag in his hand, and wondering whether or not he ought to signal Colonel Fetterman's movement to the Fort, something surprising happened down there at the foot of the ridge. Where there were a dozen Indians before, there were two dozen now and more still coming. They were coming from one of those ravines that ran back from the left of the Fort. These two dozen Indians were promptly joined by two dozen more, and before Guy could think twice, the plain was fairly covered with them.

"My goodness! What is the meaning of that?" said he.

"They have run into an ambuscade, sir," said the Sergeant.

The young officer was so astonished at what he saw, that he never once thought of the flag he held in his hand. It was done so quickly that it appeared like a dream. While he looked more Indians came out. They made their appearance in a large body too, and, dividing right and left as they approached the column, soon surrounded it entirely, and nothing but frantic and yelling Sioux could be seen from the tower.

"My goodness!" he repeated, his face turning as white as the flag he held in his hand. "I must signal that, but I don't know what to say."

His men, one and all, offered some advice, but the signal Guy sent was something like this:—

"Large bodies of Indians in the ravine at the foot of the hill. They have attacked the re-enforcements."

Almost immediately there came an answer from the Fort:—

"Signal for them not to leave the ridge."

"What good will it do to signal to them now?" cried Guy, stamping about on the tower and making no effort at all to brush the tears from his eyes. "I can't see the column at all, —nothing but Indians!"

But Guy was a good soldier, and he made all haste to signal the post commander's orders to Colonel Fetterman: "Don't leave the ridge," "Don't leave the ridge," but that was all the good it did. None of Colonel Fetterman's men saw the signal, or if they did, they were too busy to reply to it. Guy watched them for a minute or two through eyes which were blinded with tears, but could not see that the Indians were retreating in any way. On the contrary, he seemed to grow almost frantic when he saw the white men falling back. The Indians were gaining ground at every step.

"This beats me," said he, leaning one hand

on the Sergeant's shoulder and burying his face on the top of it, "We are whipped! The massacre's come!"

"They might send some re-enforcements from the Fort, sir," suggested the Sergeant, who was also crying like a schoolboy. "They have another hundred men that they can spare for Colonel Fetterman."

"That's so," said Guy, as he caught up the flag again; and he lost no time in sending the state of affairs to the commanding officer.

"The troops are retreating. Fetterman needs re-enforcements. They cannot come too soon."

"There, now, I have done my duty," moaned Guy, seating himself on the block of wood again, "I must stay right here now and see our men whipped."

But Guy did not sit there long. The noise of the fight came plainly to his ears, and every exultant yell of a Sioux, that now and then rose loud and clear above the tumult,

was almost as bad as torture to himself. Again and again he signaled to the Fort, "Our men are being overpowered. Fetterman needs re-enforcements," but no response came. They could see the men standing idly by leaning on their guns, but no attempt was made to send support to them.

"I almost wish that Colonel Carrington were out there," said Guy, for the sense of responsibility that rested upon him was almost too great for him to bear. "Have I done what I could, Sergeant? I would go myself, if he would let me!"

The men all joined in with the Sergeant in assuring him that no officer, situated as he was up there in the picket tower, could have done more than Guy did to stop the massacre, and he was forced to be satisfied with this. He sat there and watched, but was powerless to do anything. Now and then signals came from the Fort, "How goes the battle now?" and Guy's answer was always the same: "The Indians are whipping our men

completely out. Fetterman needs re-enforcements"; but that was the last of it. In much less than half an hour it was all over. Then he sprang up and caught the flag again:

"All killed. Field covered by more than one thousand Sioux."

Guy felt while sending this signal, as if he had signed his own death warrant. He tossed the flag upon the floor, seated himself on his block of wood again and covered his face with his hands. Perkins, Arthur Brigham — O Lord, they were all gone! He thought of the many acts of kindness which the boys had lavished upon him, and his feelings were too great for utterance. Sobs which he could not repress shook his frame all over.

"There is something else that wants signaling too," said the Sergeant. "The wood train is coming."

Guy jumped to his feet, and looked out over the field again. There was nothing but Sioux in sight, and they were running as if anxious

to get away from the leaden hail that was rained upon them. Guy seized the flag and this went to the Fort:—

"Wood train coming, having beaten off assailants."

As Guy turned to look at the wagon train, he saw to his immense relief the long line of ladened wagons at the foot of the ridge. As it passed the battlefield Guy, repeating the signal made from the Fort, warned it not to attack, and it did not. A frightened lot of teamsters and soldiers went by him after a while, but where was Guy's salute this time? He did not make any, but stood leaning on the top of the tower and silently regarded them as they went by.

"It is all over," he said, mournfully. "I said this morning that there would not be so many of us left in our room to-night, and this proves it. I am alone and have not even a squad of men to command."

Leaving one of his men to watch the Fort so as to be ready to answer any signals that

might come, Guy turned his attention to the battlefield; and now that the smoke had cleared away they saw the Sioux in pursuit of plunder—clothes, arms, and valuables, anything that could add to their wealth. Occasionally a faint yell would come up to their ears, faint and far off, but still plainly audible:—

"Come down here, you pickets. We have whipped some of you, and are able to whip the rest."

Having now a respectable force at his command, Colonel Carrington sent one hundred and ten men to the battlefield with orders not to leave the ridge unless they felt strong enough to attack. The howitzers went with them, and the wagons by this time being emptied of their fuel, went along also to bring in the dead; for it was rightly supposed that the Sioux did not leave any wounded behind them. Guy saw them pass by, and set himself to observe their movements. There were but few Indians left upon the field and these fled

upon the approach of the troops, and so opportunity was had to find out the cause of the defeat. It was just as Winged Arrow had told Guy: If he saw one battlefield, he never would want to see another. The dead were all stripped, and the positions of most of them led to the belief that they were killed while trying to escape. The horses' heads pointed toward the Fort. The soldiers lying near the base of the ridge appeared to have met their death as they were fleeing from the field, having seen that their re-enforcements would amount to just nothing at all. There were some few, but not very many, mutilations among the bodies, and so the soldiers recognized every one of the slain. Guy did not learn this until late that evening, when all the bodies were brought in by wagons, and then he saw his roommates cold in death. Every one of them wore a happy smile upon his face, as if he knew his fate and was ready to give up his life in the service of his country.

"There is somebody coming out from the Fort, sir," said the Sergeant, breaking in upon Guy's reverie.

Two horsemen were coming at a rapid lope, and Guy's glass showed him that they were the Lieutenant whom he had relieved in command of the tower and an after rider, who was probably a cavalryman, to hold his horse. Guy went down to the door to receive them, and when he opened it Amos Billings, that was the Lieutenant's name, must have been surprised at his greeting, although he himself was not far from shedding tears over the thing he could not prevent.

"The commanding officer said I had better come and let you hear something of that massacre," said Amos. "I tell you, Guy, it is awful!"

"Oh, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Guy, throwing his arms around Amos's neck and burying his tear-stained face on his shoulder. "What are they going to do to me?"

"To you?" repeated the Lieutenant. "Why,

nothing. Guy, don't take on this way. You were ordered up here in the tower and you stayed here. Did you not answer all the signals?"

"Yes; and I made some I ought not to have made. Fetterman never asked for help. I saw that the Sioux were too many for him, and so I asked for re-enforcements."

"Well, what of that? I guess he needed them bad enough. Now let us sit down here on the steps and I will tell you as much as I know about it."

CHAPTER XIII.

Colonel Carrington Is Depressed

"I would like a chance to kick that Winged Arrow, or whatever else he calls himself," said Colonel Carrington, as he returned Captain Kendall's salute and saw him mount his horse and lead his forty men through the gate to escort the teamsters to their post of duty. "He had no business to give Guy Preston that letter. He has thrown the whole garrison into a panic. Every man believes that a massacre is coming, and, to tell the honest truth, I really begin to believe it myself."

"Well," said Colonel Fetterman, as he walked with the commanding officer to a prominent place on the palisades from which they could keep watch of the train and its escort, "I don't see but that the latter has done some good after all. It has returned your best

scout to you when everybody thought he was a doomed man."

"That's so," replied the Colonel, after thinking the matter over. "Perhaps in that respect it has been of some use after all; and I am going to try it again."

Colonel Fetterman was somewhat surprised, but said nothing in answer to this proposition. The commanding officer had things his own way out there on the prairie, and it was not for him to offer any amendments until he was asked to give them.

"If the Sioux pitch into us, as I really believe they will, they will hold a big jubilee in their camp to-night, no matter whether they whip us or not. That will be the time for me to get a letter through; don't you think so?"

"Yes, sir, that will be the time, if any," said Colonel Fetterman, thinking of what Cyrus would have to go through with before he could get the letter safe into the hands of their superior officer who could grant the re-

enforcements for which they asked. "Are you going to try the letter on again?"

"I am, and Cyrus is waiting to see how the fight comes out before he makes the start. Now we must keep that train in sight as long as we can," said the Colonel, pulling his binoculars from its case. "The trouble is that we cannot see them after they get into a fight."

"We shall have to depend upon the picket tower after they have disappeared from our view," said Colonel Fetterman. "My command has been informed and is all ready to start."

"I hope I shall not have to send you out," said the Colonel honestly. "They are all good men in that escort, and I think they ought to come through."

The commanding officer seated himself and awaited the issue of events with his feelings worked up to the highest point at which they could go and not drive him wholly frantic. He knew that some of his men were going

to their death, but he had expected that. Not one wagon train had ever gone out from that Fort after fuel but it had always come back and reported that the Sioux had fired into them, and that so many were dead and so many wounded. But there was one thing that he always thought of with satisfaction: the train always brought their dead and wounded back with them. They left none of them for the Indians to maltreat after they had gone. The two officers saw the train when it reached the signal tower, and the men who had been on watch there for twenty-four hours were relieved by Lieutenant Preston and his squad. Five minutes more and the wagons were out of sight.

"There now," said the Colonel. "Half an hour more will tell the story."

"Yes, and I might as well get ready to move when I get your orders," said Colonel Fetterman. "You are bound to give them and I know it."

"Let us hope not, Colonel; let us hope not. It seems as though I ought to have more men

than I can muster to send out there. It is like sending a boy to mill."

The officers relapsed into silence and sat with their glasses to their eyes watching the signal tower. It came in a good deal less than half an hour. It seemed to them that the wagon train had scarcely got out of sight before the white flag, with a star in the middle of it, began to wave frantically from the top of the picket tower: "About one hundred Indians going to attack the train."

"All ready with that gun down there?" shouted the Colonel, jumping to his feet.

"All ready, sir," was the response.

"Fire!" was the next order; and a five-second shell flew over the tower and away to the further end of the ridge.

"All ready with that other gun? Fire!"

The guns on that side of the Fort were fired in quick succession, and when the smoke cleared away the flag was seen flying again from the top of the tower: "You are firing entirely too high. Shoot closer to the ground."

"Depress those guns a couple of points and fire away," said the Colonel. "That boy is keeping a close watch of the way the shells are going. I wish he had a gun up there so that he could try his own hand at it."

The guns spoke again, and this time the answer that came back was encouraging. "That is all right. You stand a chance of hitting them now."

"One would think that boy was a commanding officer," said the Colonel. "I hope we have the right range of them now."

This is all that was said in regard to Guy Preston's orders which came all unasked. He saw that the shells were flying all too wild, and did not hesitate to say so. Guy would have felt a great deal better if he had known just what was thought of it.

"Shall I go now sir?" asked Colonel Fetterman.

"Yes, I guess you had better," said Colonel Carrington sadly. "A hundred Indians is most too many for those forty men to handle. Re-

member, George, I depend entirely upon you. I will bid you good-by now. I will see you start from here."

The two officers shook one another by the hand, and that was the last time they ever met. Colonel Carrington did not want to go down to see him off. Fetterman was a brave man and an Indian fighter, but somehow the Colonel did not feel right about letting him go. Fetterman became all activity at once. He sprang down from the platform upon which he was standing, shouting: "Fall in, my men!" and disappeared in his room. When he came out he had his sword and revolver, and mounting his horse, which was ready for him by this time, he rode up and down in front of his men, who were rapidly forming in line, and urged them all to make haste.

"There are a hundred Indians out there and we are going for them," he shouted, swinging his sword around his head. "They will stand just long enough to see us getting

ready for a charge, and then they will run. You are not afraid of a hundred Indians, are you?"

"Not by a great sight, sir," said the Sergeant, who was riding down the other side of the line pushing the men into their places. "Get in there, men, and be lively about it. Lead on, sir. We are ready to face five hundred, if you say so."

"All ready, sir," said Colonel Fetterman, riding up to the palisades where he had left his commanding officer.

"Go on," was the response. He raised his hand and waved it in the air, but could say no more. Colonel Fetterman wheeled his horse, gave the commands, "Fours right. Forward march!" and rode through the gate and turned toward the picket tower; and Colonel Carrington could only settle back in his camp chair and wait to see what events were going to bring forth.

"Something tells me that I will never see those men again," said he, turning to Major

Powell, who at that moment stepped upon the platform and took a stand beside his Colonel. "I have shaken hands with Colonel Fetterman for the last time."

"Oh, Colonel, I would not talk in that way," said the Major. "Fetterman is an old Indian fighter, and it will take more than one hundred Sioux to clean him out."

"But a hundred warriors are not all they can bring into a fight," said the Colonel. "If Cyrus tells the truth, there must be a larger village than we are aware of situated behind those swells."

"Well, suppose there are a thousand of them; Fetterman can easily beat them off until he can come within range of the Fort. He has taken Captain Brown, Tony, and Mike, and three or four old Indian fighters with him, and they are bound to come out with flying colors."

The Colonel said no more, but watched the re-enforcements. He saw them break into a trot and then into a gallop, and very shortly they disappeared over the swells.

"I am a little afraid of an ambush down where they are," said the Colonel, after a few moments pause. "If Fetterman runs into it, we are gone."

"But Fetterman will not run into it. He has too much at stake for that."

Major Powell's words were intended to be encouraging, and in almost any other case they would have been so; but this time they did not have any effect upon the Colonel. He was disheartened before he sent him off to face that unknown danger, and now that he was out of sight and almost within sight of it, he felt more distress than ever he did before.

"Why don't they signal to me?" he exclaimed, when he had watched the top of the tower in vain for a sign of the white flag. "I want to know what is going on there."

"Probably there has nothing happened yet," said the Major. "If the Indians are retreating——"

The Major suddenly paused, for at that moment the flag came into view from the top of

the tower. He paused to read the signal it conveyed and as he spelled it slowly out that there were large bodies of Indians who were assaulting the re-enforcements, the Colonel jumped to his feet and seized the flag that lay near him.

"I think you said that Fetterman would not run into an ambush, if there was one formed for him," said he angrily. "He is in it now."

Then went up the signal from the Fort: "Tell them not to leave the ridge," but it was a signal that came too late to be of any use. Colonel Fetterman and all his men were so busy at that time charging down upon the enemy, that no one thought of looking for signals in their rear. But Guy saw and understood and did his best to turn the column to a place of safety, but the waving of his flag was time and strength wasted. With a yell, which Guy had often helped raise when the troops were drilling on the parade ground, and which the men now gave in order to let the Sioux know they were coming to save

the wagon train, they charged down the ridge and into the ambush. It was too late to do anything then, and Colonel Carrington leaned back in his camp chair and looked at Powell. Not another word was said by either of them, and pretty soon there came another signal from the tower: "Fetterman needs re-enforcements."

"It will take the last hundred men I have, and the Fort with every one in it will be at their mercy," said the Colonel. "You will have to go with them. Go down and call the men together——"

"Colonel, with your permission I will protest against sending them any help," said the Major. "The Colonel may be retreating, but he is retreating toward the ridge where he knows he will be comparatively safe. I tell you that man can't be whipped."

"Well, we will wait and see," said the Colonel. "I hope he has men enough with him to resist them, but I am afraid. I think I should have sent more."

"And if you had, you would certainly have left the Fort at the mercy of the thievish Sioux. You have done the best you could. Leave Fetterman alone. He is going to come out all right."

If Major Powell believed this, he was certainly doomed to be disappointed. Colonel Fetterman was whipped almost at the start, and there was no one to lend him a helping hand. In response to the signals "How goes the battle?" the reply was the same as it had always been, "He needs re-enforcements," and then Colonel Carrington got up and paced the platform in agony. The help was repeatedly called for and several times the Colonel was on the point of exerting his authority as post commander and sending the re-enforcements that Colonel Fetterman so much needed; but each time the calm voice of Major Powell was raised in protest, and the commander thought it best to wait a little longer and see how the fight was coming out.

"It seems to me that Fetterman has been allowed all the time he wanted to get back

to the ridge and hold the Sioux at bay," he often said. "Do you not think so, Major?"

It was almost half an hour since the signal had been made that the Sioux were attacking the re-enforcements, and something should have been done in that time; but the next signal that was made fairly took his breath away: "All killed. Field covered with more than a thousand Sioux."

"Oh, heavens and earth!" groaned Colonel Carrington. "I wish I had died before I had seen that signal."

Major Powell turned away to hide the tears that streamed from his eyes, and could not say a word in reply. He had protested against the sending out of help, and he would do it again under the same circumstances; but at what cost? Fully a third of the men that composed the garrison had been sacrificed, and surely that was better than to send out another hundred to share the same fate. Colonel Carrington buried his face in his hands, and it did not seem to him that he could ever

look up again; while Major Powell, after subduing the first violence of his grief, raised his eyes to watch the tower again and saw another signal waving to them.

"The wagon train is coming, having beaten off its assailants," said he. "If we can save that much, we will do well."

This aroused the Colonel, who caught up the flag and signaled to them not to attack, but to make all haste into the Fort.

"If they get back safe it will give me a hundred and ten men to send out to that battlefield," said he, after thinking a moment. "You will have to go with them. Don't leave the ridge until you see that you are sufficiently strong to hold them at bay."

"But you want me to go to the battlefield," said the Major.

"But don't go into that ambush whatever you do. Steer clear of that. Bring the bodies of all the men you can find with you."

Then the Colonel relapsed into his melancholy mood again, and Major Powell knew

that he had to do everything that was necessary for getting the relief party under way, and he lost no time in doing it either. While he was thus engaged, the gate flew open and the wagon train, well loaded with fuel, came in with a rush. A more frightened set than the teamsters were it would have been hard to find, and even the old soldiers, who had passed through more than one Indian fight, were heard to draw a long breath of relief as they came into line.

"Oh, Major, it was just awful!" said the Lieutenant, who was the first to salute him.

"Fetterman has gone up," said Captain Kendall; and there were traces of tears on his face that he was not ashamed of. "I never saw so many Sioux before. Where's the Colonel?"

"Up there on the platform," said the Major. "Go up and report to him. And, mind you, don't say anything to him that will make him feel worse than he does now, for he is completely prostrated."

"But I shall have to tell him the truth, or I might as well stay away from him," protested the Captain. "It was nothing that he could help, but we are just a hundred men short."

The Major, who did not want to hear any more about the fight until he saw the battlefield, waved his hand toward the Colonel, and the Captain dismounted and went to report the disaster of which the post commander knew almost as much as he did.

"It is not necessary for you to say anything, Captain," said he. "The signals from the tower have kept me posted. Are they all gone? Is there not one left?"

"Not one, Colonel," said Captain Kendall. "From where I stood on the ridge, I could not see anything but Sioux."

"They were retreating?" said the Colonel.

"Toward the ridge where they would be safe; but they didn't any of them live to get there. They were wiped out completely."

"You lost some men, I suppose."

"We lost seven, and were glad to get off with that. Shall I break ranks, sir?"

"Yes; and then come up and talk to me. I feel as though I were going crazy. I have sent out some men to go to that battlefield. Do you think they can go there without another fight?"

"Perhaps so, sir. We killed any number of them, and perhaps they have got all they want of fighting."

The Captain went down and said something to his men before he broke ranks, and it made them feel a great deal better for what they had done; but there was one thing that they never could blot from their minds. There was that battlefield, a mile long and half a mile wide, of which they had a plain view as they passed along the ridge, covered by the bodies of men whom they would never shake by the hand again, and the memory of it would disturb their sleep for many a night afterward. While this was going on and the Colonel sat listening to his speech, Amos Bill-

ings, the officer who Guy Preston had relieved in command of the tower, came up to the commander and saluted him.

"What is it, Billings?" said he. "I can't ask you to sit down, for there is no place."

"I don't want to stop, sir," he replied. "There are our boys alone in that tower—"

"And you want to go out and inform them that they are not forgotten by the garrison, do you? Well, go on. Take a cavalryman with you to hold your horse. Tell Guy that I would have answered his signal for reenforcements, but Major Powell told me that I ought not to. Guy did his duty up to the handle."

This was what Billings wanted to tell Guy, while they were sitting there on the steps that led to the top of the tower.

CHAPTER XIV.

In the Sioux Camp

At a late hour in the evening, or rather at an early hour in the morning of the day that preceded the battle of Fort Phil Kearney, all was silent and still in Red Cloud's camp, which was located a few miles from the stockade. The Indians had kept up their dancing and shouting until almost ready to drop with fatigue, pluming themselves on victories won in bygone days, and panting for new scalps to be added to those already gained, by the utter annihilation of the soldiers of the Fort. At last they went into their tepees to dream of the triumph which Red Cloud promised them should be theirs before many suns had passed away. The wiping away of the Fort and the utter cleaning out of all the power of the whites, was looked upon as a certain thing by the

Sioux, and all they waited for was an opportunity to use the power which they were thought to possess. And why should not the whites be cleaned out? They had come into that country without an invitation, were spreading themselves all through it, and now they proposed to build a road through their best hunting ground, which meant the thinning out of the buffalo—their only means of subsistence. All they asked of the whites was to go away and let them alone; but it seemed that the more land the whites had, the more they wanted. No place was safe for the Indian. His limits were growing smaller and smaller every day, and very soon he would find that he had no land he could call his own. Something must be done if they thought to lay their bones among their fathers', and the only way to do it was to declare battle and go upon the warpath. This was what the Sioux tribe and some of the Cheyennes had proposed to do.

When Indians are settled in their winter camp, and so far away from enemies of every

description that there is no danger of being assaulted by them, it is the noisiest place that can be found on earth. Their days are passed in loitering around the fire, but the evenings are given over to pleasure. It is then that the dancers and story-tellers are in their element, and the noise of the tom-tom drowns all other sounds, except the whooping and yelling. It had been so in this camp until the day that the renegade chiefs, as Red Cloud called them, had signed a lease for that road; but the moment that happened, the winter camp had been changed into a war camp, and all the men in it were bent upon obtaining scalps and plunder. Then the social dancers and story-tellers were out of place, and no performance of any kind was indulged in except the scalp dance. The scalps were old, they had done duty over and over again, but that did not hinder them from being brought out whenever a warrior deemed it necessary. It happened so on this night, and the braves, having grown weary of telling

what they meant to do when the soldiers came out to fight them, had passed into their lodges and gone to sleep.

The only two who did not care for slumber were a couple of youthful braves who sat on the ground outside of a tepee, talking over events which might occur at any moment; and what seemed strange, these Indians talked in whispers and in the English language and seemed to understand one another very readily. They had been so long unused to the Sioux language that they conversed in a foreign tongue as eagerly as white boys. It will be enough to say that one of them was Winged Arrow, and the other was a classmate of his, who had been to Carlisle with him. It was plain that, although they were Indians born and bred, they did not at all like the way that things were going. Obeying their fathers, they promptly left school and came home to join in the Indian outbreak, which they were assured was to be the final struggle to retain their lands and game as their fathers be-

queathed it to them; and now that they were here to help "clean out" the whites and restore everything to the Indians as it was years ago, the only thing they saw toward accomplishing that object was the destruction of a little Fort, garrisoned by three hundred men, which alone stood in their way. Of course it was easy enough to capture the Fort, but what should be the next move on their part? Indians don't like to be killed any better than white men, and that something would happen before that Fort was taken was easy enough to be seen.

It will be observed too, that in their brief conversation which took place before they went to their tepees, the Indians did not address each other by the names that the tribes had given them. One was John Turner and the other was Reuben Robinson — the names by which they had been known at Carlisle. One was named after the janitor, as we have said, and the other was called after the gardener, a white man who thought the Indians

were just about perfect. The boys called each other Jack and Rube, and to have heard them talk, any one who could not see them would have thought they were white boys sure enough.

"Say, Rube, you know that this thing don't look right to me," said John Turner (Winged Arrow), who sat with his elbows resting on his knees and his eyes fastened on the ground. "Here we have come all these miles to help the Indians in a hopeless war. I don't care a cent whether I come out of it or not."

"That is just the way I think, Jack," replied Rube. "We have lived among the white people for almost eight years, and yet we must turn around and kill them. I tell you I shall think of the old gardener every time I pull on them. That Lieutenant of yours is all right, because you gave him that letter. I wish I could find somebody to assist in the same way."

"I had to take my chances. I was roaming around just to see what the soldiers were

doing, and I ran onto this fellow when I least expected it. He is a brave boy too, and I hope he will stay in the Fort."

So it seemed that Reuben had some "medicine" which he wanted to give to a soldier, under the impression that it would save the soldier's life should he chance to be wounded and fall into the hands of the Sioux. The boys had made this up between them while they were on the cars coming to their home. Each one had the letter their fathers had sent them, and they resolved that those letters should be their "medicine"—that if either of them were found upon a dead soldier he would be safe from mutilation; and if upon a wounded man, he should be taken and treated in their rude way until he was well, and then be released and free to return to his friends. It was as little as they could do to pay the white men for all the kindness they had received at their hands while attending school. This was proposed to John Turner's father, then a prominent Medicine Man in the

tribe, and after some hesitation he agreed to it.

"You are bound to whip the whites any way," said John, in arguing the case with him.

"Oh, yes, we are bound to whip them," said the Medicine Man.

"Well, then, what difference will it make by saving one or two lives? Let the letters save two lives, one a civilian and the other a soldier, and when that is done we will turn upon the whites and stay by you as long as one of them is left alive."

The Medicine Man finally agreed to this and it was so published in the village; and although some of the warriors looked daggers at them and said that any white man who fell into their hands should be punished to the full extent of Indian law, we have seen that Winged Arrow's letter once served its purpose.

"Those people must have wood pretty soon or they will freeze and starve to death," said

Reuben. "Are you going out when the time comes?"

"I must. I must make the Indians believe that I am with them heart and soul. But there is one thing about it, Rube: I shall think that every soldier has some medicine about him, and not any of them will fall by my bullets."

"That is the way I shall do also. I really wish that this matter could be settled without a war. But every time we get a reservation fixed out to suit us, you will see some white man that wants some of it. Why can't they go away and let us alone?"

"That is not the white man's way of doing business. He wants to raise cattle, or he wants to dig for gold, or he wants some place to put his family, and the first thing we know he has the whole country. If Red Cloud should fail in his movement, and it looks to me now as though he were going to, it will be all up with us. You and I belong to a doomed race. The Indian will not survive

the buffalo, and when he goes it is good-by to us."

"I am afraid that is so," said Reuben, getting upon his feet, "and I cannot find it in my heart to fight those white people either. All we have we owe to them. I remember what hard work I had to write a composition in English. Do you remember it?"

"I believe I do, and with what labor I tried to put my words in English, so that some one would not laugh at me. I shall always remember John Turner for that. He stood by me and helped me whenever I failed, and that is one thing that makes me as good an English scholar as I am to-day."

Reuben had evidently no more to say on the subject. Following an Indian's way, he turned and left John without uttering another word and went into his tepee, while John sat there on the ground occupied with his own thoughts. The hours flew by and yet he sat there without moving, and when at last the streaks of dawn appeared in the East he saw

three Indians silently leave their lodges and take their way out over the prairie. These were the lookouts who had been appointed the night before to go and watch the soldiers and see that none of them left the Fort. On the summit of the nearest swell one of them sat down, drew his blanket over his head and the other two kept on out of sight.

"Those poor fellows do not know that every move they make is known here in camp," said Winged Arrow, slowly rising to an upright position. "As long as they stay there inside their stockade, they are all right; but the moment they organize a train to come out and get wood, that will be the last of some of them."

Winged Arrow, as we shall continue to call him, did not forget one practice he had learned among the whites, and that was to wash his hands and face. He always felt better for that, and he could not imagine why the Indians neglected it. This done, a pocket comb which he drew from some receptacle about

him was brought into play, and before the Medicine Man appeared at his door, Winged Arrow was ready for anything that was to be done.

One who had seen the Medicine Man as he appeared before Winged Arrow at that moment would have wondered at his claiming that man for his father. Winged Arrow was an ideal Indian. His frank and open face, always destitute of paint, was one which could not be seen without a desire to take two looks at it, and he was tall and as athletic as if he had been to a training school all his life; but the man who opened the door of his tepee and stepped out was exactly his reverse in these respects. He was tall, as the majority of Indians were, but he was bent almost half over, as if he were suffering from that Indian complaint, rheumatism, and his face, that had been daubed with paint the night before, was fearful to look upon. But for all that, he seemed to think a good deal of Winged Arrow, and his commands went far and were

studiously obeyed by all the members of the tribe. Giving Winged Arrow his letter as medicine was proof of his popularity with the tribe. A grunt by way of greeting was all that passed between them. The Medicine Man kept on his way, and Winged Arrow went into the tepee to get his breakfast.

The Indians are very different from white men in regard to their meals, each one breaking his fast whenever he feels the craving of his appetite. A pot, generally filled with meat and water, is placed on one side of the tepee, accompanied, if the man of the house be tolerably well off in the world, by a package of parfleche, which contains the Indian bread. If the bread is not there, the meat will do as well. A pile of ashes in the middle of the lodge tells where the meat is put to boil, and whenever an Indian is hungry he rakes together the buffalo chips, starts a blaze and puts on the pot; and when he gets too hungry to stand it any longer, he attacks the meat and eats until he is satisfied. Winged

Arrow had all this to do himself, for it was too early for the women to be astir. As he sat waiting for his breakfast to be cooked, his thoughts wandered away to the school at Carlisle, and he wondered how many teachers there would have been willing to join him in his repast.

"There is not one," soliloquized the young savage. "Every one of them would turn up his nose at such a breakfast as this. And yet I am here to fight just for keeping my people in this position. Oh, why did not the whites stay in their own country?"

The smoke of the fire began to penetrate the tepee, until it was so thick as to be unbearable to any but an Indian. Winged Arrow waited until the meat was done and then, drawing his knife, proceeded to make as good a breakfast as he could out of boiled beef.

CHAPTER XV.

What Winged Arrow Saw

Winged Arrow had not been at his breakfast long before he was startled by a noise and confusion in the camp outside. Any little bustle is enough to excite a feeling of alarm in an Indian, and coming as it did upon the quiet that reigned among the lodges, Winged Arrow was on his feet and out of his tepee in an instant. He turned toward the man on the highest point of the swell who had sat there with his blanket around him, and saw that he was on his feet and waving that blanket furiously aloft to attract the attention of the people in the village. He was repeating the signals that the other Indians had made to him — that there was something going on in the Fort. There could be but one explanation of his signals: The soldiers were

starting a wagon train and were coming out to get wood. As he was about to turn into his tepee again, he met Reuben hurrying up

"Do you see that?" said he.

"Yes, I see it," replied Winged Arrow. "Now remember that every soldier in that squad has some medicine with him that our bullets cannot penetrate. When you come back, you don't want to say to yourself: 'There is one fellow that I have wiped out.'"

The boys went into their tepee only to reappear again almost immediately. A spectator would have had to look more than once before recognizing them. They were stripped from the waist up, had bonnets on their heads, and nothing in their hands but their rifles. Neither of them carried a knife, for they did not believe in mutilating bodies that fell into their hands. Each carried a belt of cartridges which was slung around his waist. While they were going to get their horses, they heard a whoop at the lower end of the village, and the next moment Red

Cloud dashed by, mounted on a snow-white pony, stripped to the waist, as all his men were, and hideously painted, "making the picture the very incarnation of exultant war."

"Come, come," he cried in his native tongue, "Come to the ambush and then to victory."

Red Cloud was right in his element now. He was war all over. He slung his rifle, his only weapon, around his head with frantic gestures and yelled so loudly that he drowned every other shout that was sent up by his triumphant warriors; for the Sioux looked upon their victory as certain. He was a man who would have been picked out of all that throng as a leader. He was not an hereditary chieftain, as we have explained, but his chance had come for raising the war cry over those chiefs who had signed the lease for that road. It just suited the turbulent element of his tribe, and those who did not believe in his way could just step aside and leave them the glory. But that did not suit the old chiefs who were anxious to retain their authority,

and they soon found that they must acknowledge Red Cloud as their master, or be left alone with nobody to obey their orders. And thus it happened that some chiefs, some even who were friendly to the whites, joined his standard and were as fierce for battle as Red Cloud.

It did not take Red Cloud's yells long to raise the fighting men of his tribe, and when he saw so many men at his disposal, he turned and led the way across the open prairie toward the Fort. There were a thousand of them all armed to the teeth. All were silent and not a shout was uttered, however much they might have felt inclined to let the soldiers know that they were coming. Some were engaged in tying feathers and ribbons in their horses' manes and tails; others put on their bonnets; and still others were busy in anointing themselves with oil and grease to make them more agile in their movements. The women gathered upon the outskirts of the village and sent up wails over the prospective death of

husbands and lovers, who were going forth to battle.

On reaching the ravine out of sight of the Fort, the very place where Colonel Carrington was afraid that an ambush might be formed for his troops, the most of the warriors rushed into it, while the others were sent off to annoy the cutters who were by this time at work upon the wood pile. The rest stayed in the ravine, out of sight, to be ready to assault the re-enforcements when they came up. This was the time when Guy Preston sent his first signal to the Fort and it resulted in Colonel Fetterman and his hundred men coming out to help the wood cutters. We may say before we go further, that Colonel Carrington did not believe that there was so large a village as his scouts had reported to him. Red Cloud had been so sly about his movements, making his attacks with smaller bodies of men on purpose to draw the soldiers out, and the Colonel thought that with a hundred men, all experienced Indian fighters, he would be able

to hold his own with them; and that was just where he made his mistake.

When the braves drew up in the ravine, Winged Arrow and Reuben were with them. They clutched their rifles with a firm hold, as if they were impatient to be in action, and all the while Winged Arrow was wondering if that fellow to whom he gave his letter were there as an escort to the wood cutters, or had he taken the young savage's advice and remained in the Fort.

Red Cloud's orders to the warriors who went to attack the wood cutters were not to make a good fight, but to hang around and worry the cutters so that they could not do their work. Winged Arrow heard them yelling as they galloped up and down in obedience to these orders, and he knew, too, when the troops charged them, and when they were retreating. It kept on in this way for half an hour; then the Indian who had been sent to maintain a close watch on the Fort and tell them when to look for the re-enforcements,

came down the hill in great haste, swinging his blanket around his head as he came. The re-enforcements had come, a whole cloud of them were flocking out of the Fort, and soon they would be close onto them. Now all was excitement in the ravine, and the braves leaned forward and grasped their weapons, but not a yell was uttered. Colonel Fetterman and his troops came on; the savages heard their charging shout, and the body of warriors who for the last half hour had kept up a bogus attack on the wood cutters, evidently surprised at so large a force coming out, retreated into the ambuscade. That was what the Sioux were waiting for.

"Come to victory!" shouted Red Cloud.

What happened next Winged Arrow could not have told; it was the first fight he had ever been in, and it was his resolve that he would never be in another. The Sioux divided right and left as they went out; he heard the rattle of firearms and saw the smoke fill the air, and all the while he was circling around

close at the heels of a big warrior who was shouting as if he were going wild, and his rifle spoke as often as he could push in the cartridges. He did not know where the bullets went and he did not care. He aimed high, and was certain that he did not hit anybody.

At the end of half an hour it was all over. A succession of whoops and yells from one section of the battlefield told him that the fighting was done, and he drew rein upon his wearied horse and waited until the smoke had cleared away, so he could see what the warriors had done. Of the men who came out with Colonel Fetterman, not one remained. The field, as far as he could see it from the smoke that settled over it, was covered with men in blue uniforms and horses which were killed while doing their utmost to take their riders to a place of safety. Winged Arrow took no part in searching for plunder which commenced immediately. He rode over the field, taking care that his horse did not step upon any of the dead men, looking in vain for

Guy Preston, for of course he did not know that Guy, securely sheltered by the picket tower, had seen almost as much of the fight as he had himself.

At last the wood cutters train came up the hill bound for the Fort. Red Cloud was entirely satisfied with what he had done, or the braves did not want to face the leaden bullets in the soldiers' rifles, for they did not make any serious attempt to capture the wagons. He lost a few men in charges he made upon it, and then allowed it to go on in peace. Winged Arrow saw before he had surveyed the whole battlefield that the Sioux had not escaped unharmed. Although the braves moved at a headlong gallop, trusting to their speed to escape any balls that might be sent after them, some of them went into that fight for the last time. Here and there, scattered about among the blue coats, was a Sioux warrior, with all his war paint yet upon him, whose medicine had not been strong enough to keep off some soldier's bullets, and he was taken up and

carried to the village, in order to save the scalp upon his head. If that were removed, his relatives would not go to the trouble of burying him.

"Do you find that fellow here?" asked Reuben, riding up at this moment.

"No; he is in the Fort," said Winged Arrow. "I think that letter did him some good."

The two friends stayed by each other while the plundering was going on, and their hearts grew sick when they saw the mutilations which some of the warriors practiced upon the dead bodies of the soldiers. At length the lookout (for the Indians always have them when they are engaged in a massacre), told them that still another squad of re-enforcements was leaving the Fort, a large squad it was too, fully equal to the one they had whipped, and in an instant all was confusion again. The Indians were getting ready to retreat, and as soon as Major Powell's troops appeared above the summit of the swell upon which stood the picket tower, they took a few shots at him by

way of farewell, and speedily went out of sight. Not a single prisoner had been taken by the Indians. To quote from one of the chiefs, who afterward told the story to one of our soldiers, "the Sioux were too mad." They killed every one they came to, hoping that the whites would get weary of trying to open the road and that they would abandon the Fort in disgust.

And this was the way that John Turner and Reuben Robinson behaved in every fight in which they were engaged. They always made two of the attacking party, and whooped and yelled as loud as anybody, and always took their chances of death with the others; but every bullet they fired went wild, and they never had to say when they returned to camp, "There was one fellow that I wiped out." They could not forget the kindness and favors they had experienced at the hands of the whites.

While the troops under Major Powell had passed the picket tower and were hesitating whether or not to go down to the battlefield and run the risk of bringing off the dead, Guy

and Amos were seated on the steps, while the latter's arm was thrown around him protectingly, and Amos was relating the story of the massacre.

"You have seen more of it than I did, for you were up here where you had a good view," said Amos. "But the Colonel thought I had better come and tell you that the Fort was keeping watch over you."

"I am grateful to know that," said Guy between his sobs. "I did the best I could."

"Of course you did, and the Colonel appreciates it; but the only thing you are sorry for is that you asked for help when nobody told you to. Don't let that worry you. The Colonel will not say a word to you about it."

"If you please, sir," said the soldier, who had been left on the top of the tower to watch Major Powell's movements, "The Major has left the ridge."

Guy and Amos jumped to their feet and went up to the top, and a signal to that effect was at once sent to the Fort. No answer

came in response to it, and the young officers became aware that it was all right. For two hours they turned their glasses first toward the swells to see that the Sioux did not come back to assault them, and then toward the soldiers who were tenderly gathering up the dead, but nothing occurred that was worthy of note. All the soldiers obtained were a hundred dead bodies, but not a single thing in the way of arms or ammunition. Everything had gone with the retreating Sioux. They came along on their way to the Fort after a while, and seeing that Guy was watching them with interest, Major Powell sent an officer to communicate with him.

"All are gone," said he, returning Guy's salute. "Did you see it?"

"I saw some of it," said Guy with a shudder. "I don't want to speak of it. I suppose I am the only officer left in our Company."

"It looks that way to me. You don't want to go to sleep at all to-night, for the Sioux may be down on you."

When the officer moved away, Amos decided that he would go back to the Fort also, and thus Guy was left alone with his three soldiers for company. He sat down on his block with his head resting on his hands, and in that way he remained almost all night.

CHAPTER XVI.

After the Massacre

The night that followed the massacre was passed by those who took part in it in a very different manner. The dead had all been brought in and were laid out in three several rooms until the time of their burial, covered by all the flags that the Fort could raise, and sentries were keeping guard over them. Colonel Carrington had been in once to see them, but the sight was almost too much for him. He left hastily bathed in tears, and everybody who had business with him that night took note of the fact that he was a very different man from what he had seemed to be before he ordered out the re-enforcements. He continually said to Major Powell, who stayed with him almost all night:—

"I don't care one cent what the authorities say to me. If some of them had been here, they would have done just the same as I did. But sending out all these men who have obeyed my every order for so long a time is what grieves me. I wish I had been out there with them."

In the Sioux camp there was a big powwow held by those who had been in the massacre, if we except Winged Arrow and his friend. They sat a little apart from the others and watched the scalp dance, but took no part in it. Their feelings went out to the mourners who were gathered in their lodges and were sending up loud wails of grief over the sons and brothers whose medicine had not been strong enough to protect them from the bullets of the doomed soldiers. Winged Arrow and Reuben said not a word to each other, and when they grew tired of watching the scalp dance, they went to bed; but slumber was something that would not come at call. All night long the yells and whoops

of the triumphant Indians rang in their ears, but they were not thinking of them.

"All this amounts to nothing," was what Winged Arrow kept saying to himself. "They are making a big noise over the death of one hundred soldiers, but they do not take into consideration the thirty-six millions that are to come after them. Where they kill one now, ten will spring up to take their place. As soon as this gets to Washington, the enemy will send re-enforcements here that the Sioux never dreamed of. We are doomed; I can see that plainly enough."

To go back to the Fort again — there was Cyrus, the scout, lying on his bunk, sadly shaken up by this day's work. He glanced at the empty cracker boxes on which Tony and Mike had sat the evening before. They were laid out with the others, and to-morrow would see them covered by the earth over which they had often trod full of health and strength. How long would it be before such would be his fate? But Cyrus did not stop to think of

that. His companions had fallen by the Sioux, and there was nothing for him to do but to avenge them. From that day Cyrus resolved that no Sioux should cross his trail and live to tell of it. No matter what treaties the government entered into with them, there would be always one who did not sign it.

"Cyrus, the Colonel wants to see you," said an Orderly, breaking in on his meditations.

"That's me," said Cyrus, getting up and putting on his moccasins, which he had thrown off on lying down. "If anybody asks you to-morrow where Cyrus is, tell him that you don't know. I will either get those dispatches through, or I will be in the same boat with Tony and Mike."

"Are you going to try them again?" asked the Orderly.

"Yes, sir. And I am going through with them. Do you understand?"

Cyrus followed the Orderly, who led the way to the Colonel's quarters and found him in his shirt sleeves pacing up and down his nar-

row room. He could not be easy unless he was in motion, and even then he would stop occasionally, take his hands from his pockets and rumple up his hair as though he did not know what he was doing with himself. Major Powell was there, seated on a camp chair, with his head resting on his hands. The Major could not get over the massacre. Every time he tried to talk about it, he was obliged to stop, for his sobs broke his utterance.

"Sit down, Cyrus," said the Colonel in a husky voice. "Are you all ready to start now?"

"As ready as I ever shall be, Kurn," replied Cyrus. "But I don't want to sit down."

"Then there are your dispatches. I don't need to tell you——"

"You don't need to tell me anything, Kurn. I know just what you want to say. Those dispatches shall go through, or you will never see Cyrus again. Tony and Mike are killed, and I don't see that there is anything left for me."

"Be careful that you don't get yourself into trouble, while you are avenging them," said the Major, lifting his head for a moment from his hands. "We cannot afford to spare you."

"I shall take good care of myself, Major. Whenever you hear that I am gone, you may know that two Indians have gone with me."

Cyrus took the papers that the Colonel handed him and proceeded to look them over. The first one he came to was Winged Arrow's letter. This one he laid on the table. The next one was the "bogus dispatch," and this one he placed by the side of the first. The third was the dispatch which the Colonel was so anxious to have go through, and that he put into his pocket.

"Cyrus, you mean to see the commanding officer of Fort Robinson before you see us again, don't you?" said the Colonel, who had watched the scout's movements. "You don't mean to fall into the hands of the Sioux again."

"No, sir, I don't. I will leave that first paper here and I will trouble you to place it in the hands of the owner when he comes. This war is not yet over."

The post commander seated himself in the nearest chair, while the Major raised his head and looked hard at Cyrus.

"Do you think we are going to have another massacre?" was the question that arose to the lips of both of them.

"I don't know about that; but you know that the Sioux won't be satisfied with one killing. If Guy happens to fall into their hands, he will need something to bring him out. Good-by, I may not see you again, but you may bet your bottom dollar that I will get through, if I am alive."

The scout seized the Colonel's hand, and the length of time he held fast to it was all the evidence that anybody needed to show him the consideration in which he held him. The Colonel told him that he was his only hope, but Cyrus shook his head and did not

say anything in reply. The Major could not say anything. He arose and shook him hastily by the hand, and then seated himself on his chair as before, and rested his head on his extended palms. Another moment and the scout was gone.

"This will kill me and I know it," said the Colonel, resuming his walk about the room. "I don't wish any harm to befall those superior in power to myself, but I wish that General could be down here for about five minutes and feel the responsibility that rests upon me. He would send some help without any asking."

That was a long night to the two officers commanding the Fort, for neither of them thought of going to bed. The Colonel paced the room, and the Major sat with his head resting on his hands. It was longer still to the lonely watcher on the picket tower, who kept close view of the prairie surrounding him, lest the Sioux should slip up and try to add to the number of victims by taking a sly

shot at him or his men when they did not think there was any one around. He had appealed to his men time and time again to know if he did his full duty when posted there to pass the signals, but their assurance that his conduct could not be blamed and that any other officer placed in the same position would do the same, did not fully satisfy him. He had been up there while a hundred men were massacred almost within reach of him, and had not done a thing to prevent it. The two young officers, for whom he cherished an affection of which some brothers might have been proud were gone and why should he be left?

"Why did not one of them change places with me?" he kept constantly repeating to himself. "I would have gone readily, and now I would have been beyond the reach of the Colonel's reprimand or his frown. But there are the folks at home. What would they have said about it?"

Daylight came at last, and once more Guy

leveled his binoculars on the prairie, but no signs of the Sioux could be seen. Then he looked at the Fort, and saw preparations for guard mount going on, and that a Company was ready to keep guard over them while his relief was coming out to the tower. It came at last and a sorry-looking lot of men they were. They had seen the bodies laid out in the store rooms, and they could not get over it. In reply to Guy's hurried questioning, the Lieutenant said:—

"You would have thought, if you could have seen the smiles that were on Perkins's and Brigham's faces, that they had furloughs to go home and see the friends from whom they have been so long separated. They didn't act scared a bit. But I tell you, it is just awful. Captain Brown and a few old timers must have killed themselves, for they were not mutilated in the least. The other officers were all scalped."

"Did the Colonel have anything to say about my signaling?" asked Guy. It was all he

could do to ask this question, but he managed to get it out at last.

"Not a word. You did the best you could, and that is all anybody can do. You have nothing to do but to look out for the Sioux, I suppose?"

"And keep a watch on the Fort for signals," added Guy. "I hope your stay up here will be more pleasant than mine has been. Fall in, men, and we will go down to the Fort."

The Adjutant and the officer of the day met him when he came in and reported, and after saying "Very good, sir," continued in a solemn tone:—

"You saw more of that fight than we did. It is awful, is it not? The Colonel wants to see you."

"He wants to know why I made some signals, I suppose," said Guy.

"What signals?"

"Why, I told him that Fetterman needed help, when that signal was not made to me at all."

"Oh, that is all right. The Colonel will not say anything about that. You saw what a fix he was in."

Guy found the Colonel as we have seen him before, and the Major still sitting in his camp chair. They had been out to breakfast to drink a cup of coffee, and that was all.

"Sit down, Preston," said the Colonel, waving his hand toward a chair. "You saw it all, did you not?"

"The smoke would not let me see a great deal of it, sir," said Guy. "I want to say that I have got back and that I repeated every one of your signals that I saw."

"And some you did not see," put in the Colonel. "However, that was all right. I am not going to find any fault with you for that. Sit down. Now begin at the beginning and tell me all that you saw."

It did not take Guy long to do that, for, as he dwelt upon it, the scenes of the massacre came so vividly to his mind that he did not want to speak of them at all. The officers

listened, the Colonel now and then making some marks on a piece of paper which he drew toward him. He took Guy's recital down as a part of the report he was going to make out for his superior officer. When Guy was through they asked him some questions in regard to the massacre which he did not see on account of the smoke, and then told him that he could go. Guy went, feeling a great deal better than he did while he was making those signals from the tower. He went in alone to view the officers and men who had fallen in the massacre of the day before, and what he saw there is beyond our power to describe. Perkins and Brigham were not scalped, and the smiles he saw on their faces reminded him of the one Arthur wore when he told Guy that he was not to ask the Colonel for anything on his part,—he was bound to go with his Company and take part in the fight, and the first fight he got into was the last. Guy did not look any further. Tears blinded his eyes and he came out and went into the mess

room. But he could not stay there long either. The vacant chairs called to mind those who were gone, and he finally turned into his own room, where he tumbled into bed with his face toward the wall.

"They are all gone, and there's no telling how soon I may be in their place," he moaned.

Filled with such thoughts as these he soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

Re-enforcements Arrive

For a week after the massacre, Guy Preston and all the other officers and men of the Fort acted as if they were in a dream. The orders were given in a low tone of voice, the men responded to them with a silent touch of their caps, for every one seemed to think that it would not be long before they would be laid out awaiting burial, or be doomed to a worse fate in the Sioux camp. Guy was there during the burial of the men — he was one of twenty soldiers who fired the shots over their graves — and then he braced up, dashed the tears from his eyes, and tried to do his duty as he did before. He had ten men who had been detailed for various other duties when the Company was ordered out, and he was the sole officer in command of them.

Guy was not long in missing his old friend Cyrus, whose fate no one knew. Did he get through in safety with his dispatches, or was he captured by the Sioux who had taken revenge upon him for the braves they had lost during the massacre? One morning, just after Guy had come off duty during the night, the Colonel sent for him, but it was not to reprimand him. He saw that as soon as he got into his room. The Colonel had a paper in his hand which he handed to Guy.

"There is your medicine," said he. "Cyrus wanted me to give it to you under the impression that you might some day fall into the power of those thievish rascals outside."

"Why — why did not Cyrus take it with him, sir?" stammered Guy.

"No; he said the war was not yet over, and you might some day need it. You do not intend to be a prisoner in the hands of those fellows, do you?"

"No, sir," said Guy hastily. "They kill everybody who falls a captive to them. And

what is the reason Cyrus would not take it with him, sir? I am afraid he——"

"Well, go on," said the Colonel, after waiting a moment or two for Guy to say what he was afraid of, "Do you think he has been captured?"

"I think he would have been safer, if he had taken this letter with him, sir," replied the young officer.

"Yes; but you know it has saved one civilian and the next must be a soldier."

"That is so, sir. I will put it right there among the little money I have left, and I hope it may do me some good, if I chance to fall into their power. Don't you think it is about time to hear from Cyrus, sir?"

"I do; but if he has met with the usual luck that some of our scouts do, it may be another week before we get news of him."

The Colonel picked up some papers which were lying near him on the desk, thus intimating that their interview was at an end; but there was one more question that Guy wanted to have answered before he left.

"Do you think he has got through in safety, sir?" said he.

"That is hard to tell," replied the Colonel slowly. "Cyrus is a brave man, and if he fails I don't know what we shall do. That's all, Guy."

"Cyrus has failed," said Guy to himself, as he put on his cap and left the room, "I could see that by the way the Colonel looked. By George! I wonder what will be the next move the Sioux will make? Well, if worse comes to worst I will have to go. I wish I could see my mother once before my time comes."

Guy stopped after he passed the Orderly and dashed some tears from his eyes. He was the commander of a Company now, and it would look very unseemly for him to be found that way by any of his men. He took his way to his room, that room which he occupied all by himself now, and then the tears came forth afresh, until Guy began to be ashamed of his conduct. He rolled over and tried to catch the slumber he so much needed,

but when the Orderly came to call him to dinner he was wide awake.

But the Colonel was wrong in his predictions. Three days passed and then a horseman was seen rapidly approaching the Fort. The sentry called the corporal of the guard, and that officer did not stay beside him for more than a moment when he shouted:—

"There comes Cyrus!"

Guy was off duty then, and he lost no time in climbing up beside the sentry. The horseman was still so far away that they could not see his face, but the way he waved his hat around his head and used it to urge his horse to greater speed proclaimed who the newcomer was. The Colonel was out by that time, and Guy turned to him with a face that was beaming over with pleasure.

"It is Cyrus, sure enough, sir!" he exclaimed, "Re-enforcements are not far off."

In a quarter of an hour the horseman, mounted on a nag that was almost tired out, dashed through all the men assembled at the

gate, and presently was shaking hands with everybody that could get around him. It was the scout sure enough, and judging by the grin that was on his face he was glad to get back.

"Halloo, Guy," he shouted. "I haven't time to speak to you all now, only to grasp your hands and say that I am overjoyed to see you all above ground. Help is coming. Where's the Colonel?"

So Cyrus got through, after all. The story he told after he had reported to the Colonel did not amount to much in passing through his hands. He had not seen a hostile Indian from the time he left Fort Phil Kearney until his journey was safely accomplished. The pow-wow the Sioux held on the night of the massacre "threw them all crazy," as Cyrus had predicted, and there was not one to dispute his attempt to reach Fort Robinson.

"The General was awful uneasy about us, because he did not hear anything," said the scout, in conclusion, "and he was on the point of sending three hundred men to see about it;

and I tell you he packed them off in a hurry as soon as I got there."

"Bully for the three hundred men," said Guy. "Are they coming now behind you?"

"Yes, sir. They are coming as fast as they can. We have got men enough now to get that village out of there and make them take to the hills where they belong. Well, Guy, the Sioux have not scalped you yet. Have you been out after any more sage hens?"

"No, sir, and I don't think I shall go any more until we get the Sioux out of there. Cyrus, you must have had a terrible time of it."

"Oh, nothing to speak of. I went out on purpose to get to Fort Robinson, and I went. I wonder if you have anything to eat in the house? We have been in such haste to get here that we did not stop to cook any breakfast."

Guy took Cyrus under his charge and conducted him into the mess room, intending to hear more of his story when he got him by

himself; but before he could ask him to go on with it, a cheering arose out by the gate and Cyrus was left to finish his breakfast alone. There they were, three hundred infantrymen, who were moving with weary steps as if it was all they could do to drag one foot after the other—for they had made a forced march since they left Fort Robinson—but the way the garrison greeted them showed them that their trouble was over. Colonel Smith was there, vigorously shaking hands with Colonel Carrington, and when the two were through welcoming each other, they went into the commander's headquarters. The troops assembled on the parade ground, and when they had broken ranks, Guy speedily hunted up the Second Lieutenants, one of whom he found to his astonishment to be an old schoolmate of his. They had been at West Point together, had graduated at the same time, one being ordered to the Cavalry and the other to the Infantry. It took some little time for Guy to recognize Fred Bolton in this muddy, travel-

stained boy, but when he saw the smile that beamed upon his face, and his extended hand, the old schoolboy came back to him, and catching Fred around the waist he fairly raised him from the ground.

"Fred, old boy, how are you?" he exclaimed, as he swung him around once or twice before he put him on the ground again.

"Say," replied Fred, gently untangling himself from Guy's detaining hands. "Have you an apple about you?"

"An apple?" echoed Guy, not understanding the question.

"Or peanuts; anything that will do to eat. I am so hungry that I can smell the bacon in the storehouse clear out here.'

"Why, come in," said Guy. "The Sioux have kept us on pretty short rations, but I guess I can give you bacon enough to satisfy you."

Guy was introduced to the other Second Lieutenants as they were going to the mess room, and the first thing the boys asked him about was the massacre.

"Did they whoop and yell as the storybooks tell about?" said one of the newcomers. "Tell us all about it, please. We have never seen an Indian fight and we want to know what is in store for us."

"Don't ask me about it," said Guy.

"But you must have seen some of it, and we should like to know how it looked," insisted Fred. "What is the reason you were not in it? Was not your Company ordered out?"

Guy saw that there was no chance for him to plead ignorance, and while the boys were waiting for their bacon and hard-tack he went into the particulars of the fight, getting through with them as soon as he possibly could. The Second Lieutenants must have seen how badly he felt about it, and did not ask him any more questions; but when he came to tell of Winged Arrow's medicine, they looked incredulous. They were too polite to interrupt him, but exchanged significant glances with one another as if to ask what their companions thought about it.

"I don't ask you to believe my word, but here is the evidence," said Guy, producing his pocketbook. "That letter has saved the life of one scout, and if I fall into their hands while I have that letter about me, I shall expect that it will save my own."

Of course there was much to talk about and a good deal of time taken to tell it, for the supports were not expected to go on duty that day. They were given time to rest after their long, fatiguing march, and they made the most of it. At dress parade the men appeared in fine order, and then they received notice of what they were to do on the following day. Their force was strong enough now to assume the offensive, and to-morrow morning a battalion of three hundred men would start out to break up that Sioux village and, as Cyrus had said, "drive them into the hills where they belonged." Colonel Smith was to be in charge of the troops, with Major Powell second in command. There was one thing that made Guy grow an inch taller when the

order was read: his small company of men were not to be left out after all. There were a hundred cavalry to go with the troops, to serve as eyes for them, and Guy and his company were to make part of them.

"I hope the Colonel will lead us across that battlefield," said Fred, as they returned to their quarters.

"Oh, he will," said Guy. "But we will not see anything—nothing but the spot where brave men offered up their lives to try and 'pacify' those Sioux. We will see the signal tower too. I hope that when you go there to take charge of it, you will see a better time than I did."

"Well, wait until a history of this thing gets to Washington, and we will see help coming out here enough to annihilate those Sioux. The General was sorely put out about it, and he sent a dispatch that wil make those fellows open their eyes."

Morning came at length, and with it came the men who were to compose the expedition,

forming on the parade ground in view of all the officers. There was one thing about it that Guy always disliked to see, and that was their ammunition and provision train. Before the troops could go into a fight with the Indians, they would be obliged to take care of that train, because when that was lost, everything they had was lost. The hostiles would make an attack upon that train first, paying no attention to the other men, and if they could stampede that, their success was assured. The Indians did not believe in taking any train with them. All the ammunition and food they needed during their raids were carried on their horses, and if they were worsted in the fight they got out of the way with wonderful celerity and their ammunition and food went with them.

Fred and the other newcomers who had arrived with the re-enforcements the day before gazed with interest at the picket tower, saw that the soldiers who had come to relieve them took the place of the men who had

stayed there all night, and then went on to the battlefield. As Guy had said they found nothing there, not even a bayonet with which the soldiers had endeavored to defend themselves, for the Sioux had searched the field thoroughly and everything had disappeared.

"Here's where Captain Brown and three others defended themselves," said Major Powell, drawing Colonel Smith's attention to a place in the rocks where the grass was all trampled down and empty cartridge shells were scattered all about. "They must have made sure play for some of those fiends who came at them. Captain Brown killed himself right here."

It was a gloomy place, the battlefield that but a short time before had resounded with the war cry of the fierce Sioux and the rattle of carbines from the soldiers, and Guy was glad when they left it behind. Something kept telling him that he was going to see trouble before he came back, but he banished all such thoughts and had no place for them.

His work lay in the expedition before him, and to that he gave the whole of his attention. In a short time the memory of the scene through which he had passed left him, and he was ready to join in with what the others had to propose, so long as it did not attract the attention of their commanding officer, Major Powell. So it is with soldiers the world over. A disastrous battle, during which so many of their old friends, perhaps their own tentmates, have gone to their long home, will depress their spirits for a time, and they welcome anything, no matter how trivial it is, that will draw their thoughts away to other matters and make them soldiers as they were before.

In due time they reached the site whereon the Sioux village had stood while they were engaged in the massacre, and where everything denoted that they had abandoned it with the utmost haste. Plunder of every sort which goes to make up the wealth of the Indian was scattered about, and beside the

lodge poles, for the tents were gone, were the remains of half a dozen Indian ponies that had been sacrificed to go with their owners to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

"I don't understand the meaning of that," said Fred Bolton. "Did they kill their ponies on purpose?"

"Certainly," said Guy. "The Indian ponies have spirits as well as their masters; and when one is killed and his scalp not removed——"

"Do their scalps have anything to do with it?"

"Of course they do. If you scalp an Indian, his body becomes so much carrion which is not worthy of a burial; but if his friends can save the Indian without letting him fall into our hands, he is given all the rites that an Indian can think of. These ponies will go with him to the spirit land, and if we had time to hunt up the places where the owners are buried, we would find there their rifles, matches, scalping knives, and every other thing they need to go right to work."

Guy had many things to tell the newcomers, and during the two weeks that the expedition was out he had plenty of time around his camp fire at night to tell them all he knew about the hostile Indians. What he did not know the guides took up, and if the new men did not learn something about the Sioux before they got through, it was their own fault. They generally told some funny stories. but a wink from Guy told how much of them they had better believe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Prisoner at Last

"So this is scouting for Indians, is it?" exclaimed Fred, when the bugle blew one morning and Guy began buckling on his sword. "We have been out two weeks, and during that time we have not seen one single Indian, nor the sign of one. I thought they would be all around us. That is the way they act in storybooks."

"We are not dealing with storybooks now, but with solid flesh-and-blood Sioux," said Guy, who was making all haste to answer the bugle call. "We have seen signs enough, even if we have not seen Indians. We have followed their trail for a week, and that is as much as I want to see."

"But why don't we follow them up and whip them? All we have to do is to go back

there in the 'bad lands,' and there we would find them."

Before we go any further we should like to inquire if you have any idea of how these "bad lands" look. We have often heard that hostile Indians find refuge there when badly pressed by the troops, but how do they appear and in what shape are they? You have often seen a clay field after a long and hot drought in summer, how it is seamed over with innumerable cracks, perfectly perpendicular, leaving miniature chasms between. This, magnified by a thousand, are the "bad lands" of the Northwest. They are immense patches of clay soil, baked by the long and intense drought of that climate into chasms four or five feet wide and perhaps twenty feet deep, absolutely impassable for wagons, quagmires in the early spring, and a labyrinth of deep gullies in summer. The hostiles know every one of these ravines, where it leads to and the springs of water that are to be found on the banks of it, and the troops that are sent after

them do not. Once fairly inside the "bad lands," the Indians disappear and leave no trace behind.

"We do not want to be whipped badly enough to go into those 'bad lands,'" said Guy, with a laugh. "The moment Colonel Smith saw where the trail led to, he said that we were not strong enough to go in there after them, and when he said that, he hit me right on top of the head. I don't want to go in there either. I am perfectly willing to go back to the Fort, without seeing any of them. You don't know how an ambush looks. I have seen one of them from a distance, and I don't want to see another."

"Well, good-by, if you call that going," said Fred, as Guy swung himself upon his horse. "Keep your eyes open, and don't let any Sioux come down on us."

Guy fell in beside his Company, waved his hand as a farewell signal to Fred, and rode out with the cavalrymen to act as eyes for the infantry, who were guarding the train.

These marched along pretty nearly as they pleased, giving no thought to danger, for they knew that the cavalry, who skirted their flanks at a distance of three or four miles, would see the Sioux long before they could and easily warn them, so that they could get into line of battle. Presently the bugle sounded again, and that was a call for Fred. In a few minutes the entire expedition was under way, bound for the Fort, without having seen a warrior since they had been out.

"They are all in the 'bad lands,'" said Colonel Smith, who felt somewhat crestfallen over his bad luck. "I really wish that I had about four times as many men as I have with me. I would follow them into their retreats and drive them out."

That was the way that more than one man felt in regard to the disappearing Sioux, and many a soldier clutched his piece with a firmer grip and cast his eyes toward the hills on which he had last seen the cavalry, in the hope that they would come over the swells in

haste with the report that the Sioux were not far behind them. That would give him a chance to knock over one or two to pay them for the number they had killed during the massacre at the Fort. That was something the soldiers could not get out of their minds. They had already made it up among them that "Remember Fort Phil Kearney" should be their battle cry the next time they went into action. And the opportunity came for them much sooner than they had expected. They had marched until pretty near twelve o'clock and the commanders were holding a consultation about what they had better do for dinner, whether to halt the column at the top of the nearest swell and have dinner there, or go on until four o'clock and then have dinner and supper together, when suddenly, and without the least warning, they heard the rattle of carbines behind the nearest hill on the right. A squad of cavalry, numbering perhaps twenty men or more, had discovered the Sioux. They had seen the squad more

than half an hour before, and they were going along as if everything were all right.

"Indians! Indians!" burst from a score of throats.

"Remember Fort Phil Kearney!" chimed in some others.

"That is Guy's squad, as sure as you live," exclaimed Fred, and his face turned a little pale as he drew his sword from its scabbard. "I guess Guy knows how it is to see an ambush close by."

"Major Powell, take two hundred men and hurry to help that cavalry," shouted Colonel Smith. "The others are to guard the wagons. Lieutenant Bowen, we will keep right ahead at the rate we were going. Close up, everybody."

These orders were obeyed almost as soon as they were issued. By the time the one hundred men had closed up about the wagons, Major Powell had brought his men together, and moving at double quick they ran toward the hill which separated them from the view of the hostiles. Fred's company was with

Major Powell, and although the color had not come back to his face, he did his duty as though they were going out for drill. "Close up, men. Don't lag behind," was the way in which he urged them to keep up their formation, although before he was half way to the swell he was "winded," and would have been glad to sit down for a rest.

There were other things besides the rattle of carbines to which the men had to listen. Before they had gone many steps a whole chorus of loud and fiendish yells came plainly to their ears, and caused the hearts of some of the soldiers to beat a trifle faster. A moment afterward the remnant of the squad of cavalry they had come out to help suddenly appeared at the top of the hill. Fred took one look at it and the fears which he had before experienced came back to him with redoubled force.

"Only six men left," said he to himself. "They numbered twenty at first. What has become of the balance?"

A few steps more and the whole matter was revealed to him. Of course there were orders to be obeyed, such as "Aim! Right oblique, fire!" and their bullets whistled over fifteen or more Sioux who, lying flat upon their horses' backs, were rapidly leaving the field; but in spite of them all, Fred had time to look about him and to see, if he could, what had become of his friend, Guy Preston.

"By gracious!" exclaimed one man. "They have some prisoners with them."

"Where, where?" stammered Fred.

"Don't you see those feet hanging out over the side of that horse that is just going over the hill?" replied the soldier. "There's another and another. My fingers are all thumbs, and I don't see why I cannot load my gun. Shoot those men. They are taking some captives away with them."

The soldiers were keenly alive to the fate of their prisoners, and more than one bullet was aimed for the warriors who had them on their horses; but they all flew wild, and before

the men could load their guns again the last of the Sioux had disappeared. It was merely a bold dash. The Sioux had intended to wipe out a squad of cavalry and had succeeded. The other squads of cavalry were sent off as fast as they came, until there were nearly a hundred in pursuit of the Sioux; but all to no avail. They got a few shots at them, and that was all.

Meanwhile the infantry had broken ranks and spread themselves over this new battlefield of the Sioux — to succor the wounded, if there were any, and to bury the dead. The first proved unnecessary because there was not a wounded man on the field; the Indians had made sure work of them. Fred was hunting for Guy. He was not among those who retreated to the top of the swell, so he must be among the dead or else —

"It is awful to think of," murmured Fred, who was almost afraid to go any further, for fear that his prediction might come out true. "I declare, there is his horse. Shot through the head. But where is Guy?"

Tom, the horse which Guy had told the Colonel could beat any Indian pony that ever lived, had met his end at last, but his rider was gone. His saddlebags were there, but everything in the way of weapons had disappeared. Guy had been carried away by the Sioux, when they retreated. While Fred stood wondering what was to be his fate, one of the soldiers who had been at the Fort at the time of the massacre stepped up and touched his cap to him.

"Did you know Cyrus, sir?" said he.

"Cyrus?" repeated Fred. "What was his other name?"

"He hasn't any that I know of, sir," replied the soldier. "I just wanted to tell you that he is among the dead."

Fred accompanied the soldier to the spot where Cyrus lay, but he took one look at him before he turned away. He did not want to see any more of a battlefield, and he would have been glad, if he had never seen it at all. Cyrus lay as he had fallen from his horse,

with a scowl of hatred upon his features, and the mark upon his shirt just above his heart told how he had given up his life.

"Why don't we fall in and go away from here?" said Fred impatiently. "I wish I were back at the Fort."

"This isn't anything to what the old battlefield was, sir. With Mr. Preston gone and Cyrus done up for good, it seems as though we have lost everything worth living for."

And where was Guy Preston during all this time? He fell in with his men in response to the call and rode away on the right to keep watch for the Sioux. Their squad of twenty men was led by a First Lieutenant, a bold fighter, but rather inexperienced, so far as Indian tactics were concerned. But Cyrus was with him, and if the Lieutenant followed his advice, it was likely that he would keep out of trouble. Until twelve o'clock they saw nothing but the prairie on each side of them; they thought that they were alone, but Cyrus thought he knew a little better than that.

"You can't always tell about these thievish rascals that we are after," said he, as he rode forward with the officer. "Now there is a place that is the best kind for an ambush. When you come to a deep gully like that, you want to do one of two things: either keep out of the way of it entirely, or go a mile or two above the opening and cross there."

"Why, if there were any Sioux in there, they would get out," said the Lieutenant.

"Of course, and that is what you want. If the Indians were in there, they would be right in the mouth of the gully; and they are too sharp to let you get behind them. They would dig out."

This advice was all right, if the Lieutenant had seen fit to follow it; but he chose to do as he pleased about keeping away from the ravines. Three or four of them were passed in this way and still he saw no Sioux; and finally he began to think that Cyrus was talking merely because he had nothing else to do.

Of course this made Cyrus very angry, and he fell back until he could speak to Guy.

"That Lieutenant knows more than anybody else on the job," said he, "but you will see some fun before long."

"I suppose that he thinks the hostiles are all in the 'bad lands,'" replied Guy. "They would not come out just to follow us up, would they?"

"The only safe Indian is a dead Indian. Of course they would come out even for the sake of shooting at us. There! What did I tell you? We are gone up."

While Cyrus was talking in this way the squad happened to cross one of those ravines that opened into the prairie along which they were traveling, and seemed to be deserted like the rest; but in an instant it became alive with Sioux. They did not yell when they made their charge as they almost always did, for they did not want the men who were behind the swells to know anything about their attack until they were through with it, but

came out silently and swiftly and opened fire upon the soldiers before they knew it. It seemed as if half the men and horses went down at the first volley. The Lieutenant was greatly surprised, but he was still untouched, and prepared to do his duty as any soldier should.

"Steady, there!" he shouted. "Right front into line! Revolvers! Give them the best you've got!"

The next moment the officer raised his hands above his head and fell from his horse, but the rest of the soldiers heard his command and obeyed it. When Guy was fairly turned toward the Indians he was thunderstruck, for there seemed to be no end to them. He had just time to draw his revolver and fire twice, when he felt himself pitched headlong on the prairie. Tom would never get frightened and run away with him again. Guy was stunned, so forcibly had he struck the ground, and before he could get his wits about him or make a move to draw that loaded Derringer he car-

ried in his hip pocket, he felt himself seized by the collar and lifted bodily from the ground. To be sure he struggled and made an effort to get hold of his saber which hung from his wrist, but of what use was it while he was taken at every disadvantage? Ere he was aware of it, he had been thrown across a mustang in front of a stalwart rider, his feet swaying from one side of the horse and his head bobbing up and down on the other, and was being carried rapidly away. He was helpless. The warrior held him by the throat with one hand and with the other hand he lifted his rifle and shook it at the soldiers, while he raised a shout of defiance at them. The soldiers saw Guy as he was carried away in this manner, and more than one bullet sped toward the brave that had captured him; but in their excitement the soldiers all shot wild. Guy was a prisoner now, and his medicine that had been given to him by Winged Arrow was the only thing that could avail him. Was that medicine strong enough to help him?

CHAPTER XIX.

Conclusion

It seemed to Guy Preston that the rider who held him in position on his mustang would break his body in two before his horse had taken many more of his frantic leaps. You will remember that the only place he touched the horse was on the small of his back, with his head dangling on one side of it and his feet on the other; but it seemed to be all one to the warrior, who shook his rifle and shouted at the soldiers as if he were in high glee. He struggled to the best of his ability, and when at last it seemed to him that he would grow wild over the agony he was in, everything grew blank to him, and from that time he was as helpless as a dead boy. He knew nothing of the efforts the cavalry had made to rescue him; and when his captor wanted

to stop to breathe his horse, he threw the boy to the ground as if he had been a bag of corn. The motion seemed to revive Guy. He struck on his feet, made three or four efforts to recover himself, and then sank down, regardless of his fate.

The warriors had all stopped to rest their horses, for they believed that the pursuit was over. The spot where they paused was in one of the ravines that led to the "bad lands," and while one or two of their number remained on the hills to note the movements of their pursuers, the others gathered around their prisoners and went into ecstasies over them.

"Hoopla!" said one who seemed to have a little smattering of English. "Nice time the squaws have to-night. Take um scalp and burn um."

These words aroused Guy and he sat up on the ground. He thought of Winged Arrow's medicine, and put his hand into his pocket to see if he could find it; but the Indians,

believing that he was looking for a weapon, rushed upon him and stretched him again upon the earth, while one drew his scalping knife and yelled as if he were going to use it. He seized Guy by the hair and passed his knife around it, and when he arose to his feet he had a handful of it, which he shook in the boy's face. Guy's heart seemed to stop beating. Were his captors going to scalp him alive? He put his hand to his head and found, greatly to his relief, that although his hair was gone, his skin was there as usual. A roar of laughter was the result, and when it was ended one of the braves said:—

"Brave boy. To-night stake him out on ground. Then take scalp sure enough."

It was something to know that they were going to take him to the village before they began torturing him, and Guy at once became more at his ease and began to look around among his captors to see if Winged Arrow was there. He did not see him, and he concluded that he would let his letter go until

he could see him or find some means to send it to him. What was the reason he had not asked him his name in Indian when he met him there on the plains? That would have reached him sure, and he resolved to try it in English. Perhaps the Indians knew enough of that tongue to recognize it. The Sioux were sitting down in a circle and some of them were getting out their pipes to indulge in a smoke.

"Do any of you know English?" he asked at a venture.

"Oh, yes, me know it," said one of the Indians, tapping his breast with his hand. "Me know English a heap."

"Then perhaps you know Winged Arrow," said Guy. "He is my friend."

Guy did not see what there was in this to excite the laughter of the Indians, but it raised it sure enough, and his captors began passing some remarks about him in their native tongue which made them laugh louder than ever. Guy gave it up in despair, and

settled back on the ground again. The Indians either could not or would not understand what he was trying to get at, and it was useless to try them further. His mind was so busy with his own affairs that he had not thought to see if there were other prisoners in the party, but now he found that there were two—one a member of his own company, who had evidently been worse treated than Guy was, for he lay upon the ground as motionless as if he were dead. Guy got up and went to him. He could not bear to see one of his own kind used as bad as he was without saying something to him.

"Oh, sir, we are gone up now," said the soldier, in a faint voice. "My back is broken."

"I guess I know about how you feel, for my back is feeling the same way," replied Guy. "Brace up, and never say die. When we get to their village, I will see what I can do toward effecting our release."

"Oh, if you could do that, you would win my everlasting gratitude. I can't bear to be

tied up and burned, just because I happen to wear the blue. Have you a drink of water about you, sir?"

Water was something that Guy did not have, and he began to feel as though he would like a drink himself. He approached the Indians, who were now sitting on the ground engaged in the formality of smoking, and holding his right hand as if he were grasping a cup, carried it to his mouth and turned it up as if drinking from it. He knew this much of the signs that Cyrus had taught him. One of the Sioux immediately said something in his own tongue and pointed down the gully, and then went on with his smoking.

"There is not any water here," said Guy, returning to the soldier. "We must wait until we reach the village. Now brace up, and don't let these people see that you are afraid of them. If you do they will torment you in every way that they can think of."

When Guy went to speak a word of encouragement to the other prisoner, he cast his eyes

around among the horses that were standing a little distance away, and saw that there were five of them that belonged to the government. There were thirty of the Indian ponies, and twenty-eight savages sitting in that circle on that ground; and by counting the two who had been sent out as look-outs, it proved to his satisfaction that the Sioux made that attack upon the cavalry and came off without losing a man. No wonder that they felt jolly over it.

Guy spoke such words to the other captive as he thought would serve to encourage him in the ordeal which he knew was coming, and by that time the lookouts came in from the hills and the Indians all got up in readiness to resume their march to the village. But before they went they determined to examine the pockets of their captives and see what they could find that was worth stealing. In obedience to a sign from one of his captors, Guy got up and the Indian thrust his brawny arm into his pants. His pocketbook was the

first thing he pulled out. The small amount of money that Guy had was looked at and thrown aside, the Indian not knowing what the bills were. The next thing was Winged Arrow's medicine; and when the savage unfolded that and looked at it, he uttered a grunt which brought all his companions to his side. Guy's heart beat against his ribs with a sound like a trip hammer, for he knew that something was going to happen now. First one Indian examined it and then another, all uttered grunts indicative of surprise or indignation, he couldn't tell which, and another savage, the same one who had gone through the motions of scalping him before and was ready to do it again, for he held his knife in his hand, quietly put it in his belt and made no move toward Guy. The Indians now became excited and wanted to get to their village as soon as possible. The talking and laughing suddenly ceased. The horses were brought up and at a sign Guy and one prisoner mounted; and when it came to the

captive who was too weak to help himself, he was not jerked and hauled around as he was before, but an Indian lifted him in his arms and put him on the horse as tenderly as if he had been an infant. There was something in Winged Arrow's medicine after all, and when he saw how prompt the savages were to obey it, it made the chills creep all over him.

"No one need ever tell me again that the Sioux are nothing but savages, and have no hearts at all in them," muttered Guy, as he fell in with the others and rode down the ravine. "But that paper is not through yet. If it pass Red Cloud and the other big chiefs at the village, I shall really begin to believe there is SOMETHING in Indian medicine."

The ride now was a very intricate one, and Guy marveled greatly when he saw the Indian who was leading turn first into one gully and then into another, and never seem to be at a loss which way to go. If a body of troops ever got in there with Indians all around

them, their destruction was certain. The next thing was the village which came into view. A sudden turning of one of the gullies, when everything seemed to be deserted, and there were the tepees scattered along both banks of a little stream which came murmuring down from the hills. That was too much for one of Guy's companions in trouble. He dismounted from his horse, stretched himself out at full length beside that stream and drank as if he had not seen any water for a month.

Guy's fear and anxiety increased now, for he longed to see Winged Arrow, to tell him what had been done with his medicine and to ask him if there were the least grounds for hope for any prisoner besides himself. Somehow he could not get it out of his mind that his men had seen the prairie for the last time, but that was too dreadful to think of. The Indians along the stream took but little notice of the party as they rode through the village, with the exception of one who gazed at them as if there were something on his mind. This

one fell in behind and walked along with them until they came to a lodge which he entered without ceremony. It was Reuben who was hunting for Winged Arrow. There was something about Guy's shoulder straps which attracted his attention, and he wanted to see his friend before it was too late. The lodge he entered was the one Winged Arrow occupied, and he found that person just getting ready to go out.

"He has come," said Reuben.

"So I have heard, and I am going to see about it," said Winged Arrow. "I wonder if he has that letter with him."

Reuben shook his head. He did not know what had passed between the Indians and their captives on the way up.

"It will be hard enough for me to help him, even if he has it with him," continued Winged Arrow. "But if he has forgotten it, it is all up with him."

The young braves hastily left the lodge and followed along after the party until they

came up with them standing in front of the chief's tepee. One glance at the boy who wore the shoulder straps and Winged Arrow saw that he was the same one he had once met on the prairie. Guy saw and recognized him at the same moment, and something like a smile of confidence lit up his face.

"I am sorry to see you here," said Winged Arrow; and his face assumed a gloomy expression.

"And I am sorry to be here," said Guy. "Now we will see if your medicine amounts to anything. There are three prisoners here ——"

Winged Arrow turned his head away and raised his hand, as if motioning for Guy to stop.

"If I can get you out safe, you must be satisfied," said he. "I had hard work to get that other man free, and I don't know whether I shall make it with you or not."

Guy lost all his confidence from hearing

Winged Arrow talk this way, and he began to think that his own escape, which had seemed so bright when Winged Arrow first came there, was not so sure after all. He watched his friend go into the chief's tepee, and from what he had read he knew that no one had a right to do that, and in about five minutes he came out again; but his face was still gloomy.

"Get off that horse and come with me," was what he said to Guy.

The boy lost no time in obeying him. He saw that his first object must be to get out of sight of the Sioux, and he soon saw the necessity for that, for savage glances were cast upon him as he passed along, and he remained close at Winged Arrow's heels, while he led the way toward his father's lodge. Once inside, he breathed more freely, although he was ushered right into the midst of the Medicine Man's family. He did not have time to see who was there, but followed his guide to a remote corner of the tepee and seated

himself on a pile of blankets pointed out to him.

"Now whatever happens, don't open your head," said Winged Arrow. "Don't say one word to me. If you go out of here without me, you are gone."

The Death Angel never came so close to Guy Preston as he did then. He felt in his hip pocket for the loaded Derringer he had taken pains to keep about him, but remembered that it had fallen out during that wild ride after he was captured, and now nothing remained for him but that letter. He noticed that Winged Arrow did not go any further than the entrance of the lodge. He took his rifle with the air of one who would use it if he found it necessary, and seated himself just inside the flap door and watched everybody that came in or went out. It looked as though Winged Arrow was going to fight to retain possession of him. He listened, but could hear no signs of what had been done

with the captives outside. They had been taken away, and Guy told himself that he had seen them for the last time.

It was pretty nearly night when these events happened, and if the hours were long to Guy they must have been doubly so to Winged Arrow, who never changed his position after he seated himself. The Sioux came in and cooked their meals as they wanted them, but nobody offered Guy a morsel. In fact he did not want anything, for he was so completely wrapped up in thoughts of escape. At length the door was raised and a bundle of something was thrust into Winged Arrow's hands. He took it immediately and came over to Guy.

"Put these on," said he, in a hurried whisper. "Be quick."

Just then someone outside set up a rapid beating on the tom-tom, and Guy thought that it was the signal for something of which he did not like to think; but it was a notice that the social dances, which were now in

vogue, were about to commence. The fate of the captives had not yet been decided upon.

With nervous haste Guy unfolded the bundle and found an Indian blanket, a pair of leggings, and moccasins. He looked at Winged Arrow and saw that he was standing erect and had enveloped himself in another blanket, so that nothing but his face could be seen. Guy was quick to follow his motions, and when the change had been effected no one could have told which of the two was the Indian and which the white boy. The other Sioux sitting around in the tepee made no remark regarding the change, and, feeling greatly encouraged, Guy walked over to his friend and followed him outside into the darkness.

"Keep still," was what Winged Arrow whispered to him. "Do just as I do."

The tepees were all deserted by the Indians, their owners having gone to the further end of the village to engage in the dance, and no one saw them as they passed. A little further on and somebody with a horse loomed

through the darkness. He kept on ahead of them, not a word was exchanged between the two, and it was evident that he was in the plot, if that was what Winged Arrow's movement proved to be. For two hours they walked, and then the prairie came into view. Then the horseman stopped and Winged Arrow and Guy went up beside him.

"There, sir, you are free," said the young Indian. "Don't stop to talk, but get on and do your best. Don't you be caught again."

It did not seem to Guy Preston that he could leave his friend without making some acknowledgment. He did not "stop to talk," but he thrust out his hand which Winged Arrow took and shook warmly.

"Which way?" said he.

"That way," replied the Indian, pointing straight over the prairie.

It occurred to Guy to ask Winged Arrow what he and his friend were going to do when it became known among the Sioux that one of their captives had slipped through their

hands, but before he could form the question he was standing there alone. The Indians had vanished in the darkness.

To jump upon his horse and start him in the direction he had been told to go was done in less time than we have taken to tell it. Have you ever seen the prairie? If so you can have some idea of what Guy had to go through. It was the same thing over and over again. Every little hill he mounted when daylight came revealed nothing but a lonely waste with not a living thing in sight. And so it was during the whole of that day until the light faded away and darkness began to settle down on the plain. Then Guy thought he saw a horseman on a distant swell. He stopped and looked at him, but the horseman, if such it were, did not move.

"Is it a Sioux or a white man?" said Guy to himself. "I can't be worse off than I am now, and so I will go and see who it is."

For the first time he put his horse in a lope, keeping his eye on the object and wait-

ing to see what he was going to do. At length another object appeared by the side of the first, and something that hung down by his horse attracted the attention of Guy, and led him to swing his blanket around his head. It was a cavalry saber, and showed Guy that he was among friends.

We cannot stop to tell how Guy Preston was received by the men who had long ago made up their minds that they had seen the last of him. The expedition had stopped to bury their dead and had just gone into camp. Guy said that the two prisoners who were captured at the same time he was were in the hands of the Sioux yet, and he could not tell what was to become of them, and neither did he know what would be done with Winged Arrow and his friend for assisting one captive to escape. When he reached the Fort, Colonel Carrington listened in surprise to the story of his release, and declared his belief that there was something in Winged Arrow's medicine after all. He moved back to

Nebraska in the early spring, after Fort Phil Kearney had been demolished. His superiors blamed him for Colonel Fetterman's defeat. They did him an injustice, for it was Red Cloud's ability and strength that won the day.

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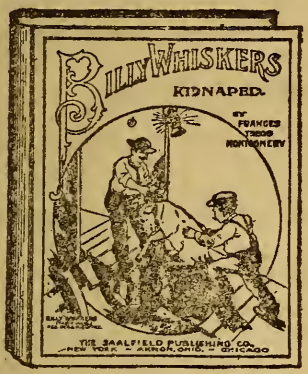

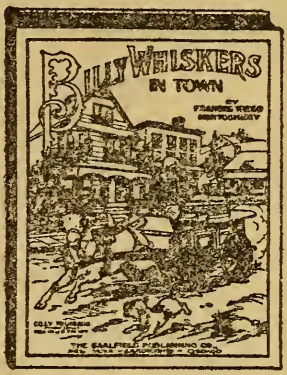

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